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Theology

REUNION IN ETERNITY

Future Life

BY

W. ROBERTSON NICOLL

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SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
AT CLAREMONT
California

TO
LADY ADAM SMITH
IN MEMORY AND HOPE

PREFACE

THE literature on Reunion in Eternity, to which this little book is a humble contribution, is exceedingly meagre. There is perhaps not much public instruction on the subject, yet the theme has never drawn so many solicitous hearts as it draws to-day. There are many who think of little else. They count the hours and the days, the down-sittings and the uprisings, that are between them and the great restoration.

The matter of this book is neither systematic nor controversial, and I may state in a few words the main conclusions. They are :

1. That faithful souls pass in dying to the immediate presence of Jesus Christ.
2. That they are, as Bishop Gore says, 'cleansed and enlightened and perfected.'
3. That they are carried into the heart of their desire in immediate reunion with their beloved who have gone before.

4. That they wait in peace for the Second Advent,
the Resurrection, the Judgment.

My warmest thanks are due to the friends who have helped me in the preparation of this volume. In particular, my thanks are due to my friend and colleague, Miss Jane T. Stoddart, who has written the chapters on 'Dante and Reunion' and 'The Teaching of Luther and Melanchthon,' and has supplied many of the extracts here given. For the help afforded in this department by my accomplished friend, Professor James Moffatt, I am most grateful, and I have to thank very warmly the distinguished authors who have written me the letters which are printed in the Appendix—Professor A. S. Peake, D.D., of the University of Manchester; Dr. T. E. Page, of Charterhouse; Canon William Barry, D.D.; and Mr. Arthur E. Waite.

HAMPSTEAD, *October 1918.*

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PART I
ESSAYS ON REUNION

I

‘IN CHRIST REDEEMED, IN CHRIST RESTORED’

IN this world of death a message of Reunion in Eternity is a first necessity. It is as music to all souls in pain. We do not say that it is always listened to by the bereaved in the first force of their passionate misery, while they feel in their breasts the burning of the murderous steel. But the months and the years soften a little the first anguish of the bitter wound. Then the dreadful thing is to think of the long life to come which may go on in loneliness for so many years. This passes into the calm of acknowledged loss settling deep and still over the subduing days of life. After that there may come the peace of believing, the waiting in hope.

Depending entirely on the teaching of the New Testament, we propose to set down a few points which are generally admitted to be part of its unveiling.

(1) The subject concerns only those who are in Christ. Apart from His doing, His dying, His rising again, His testimony, there is no doctrine of the future. The essence of personal Christianity lies in love to a personal Saviour. He has abolished death by His Resurrection. He is the Conqueror of the last enemy. He has risen and ascended, and He rules. In His safe keeping are all faithful souls, and, we may surely say, the bodies which were once the robes and homes of these spirits. It is He Who takes care of the passing soul and as a magnet draws it upward to Himself. It is towards Him that the great forces of love go forth. This fact carries reunion with it. Our gathering together unto Him in the next life, to know and be known of Him, will of itself make necessary our knowledge of one another. He Who inspired the human love that now seeks its own, He Who was Himself strengthened and solaced thereby during the earthly years when He walked softly in the bitterness of His soul, will never deny us our heart's desire.

(2) It may be said that this excludes the vast majority. But it is not so. We do not know what may pass of a sudden, in the very moment

of dying, between the soul and Christ. All the great Christian teachers have told us that the very slightest recognition on the part of men of the Divine Sacrifice is enough to secure salvation. In his two sermons on the penitent thief Mr. Spurgeon refuses to admit that he is dealing with a solitary, or at best an exceptional case. He says that if the thief was an exceptional case there would have been a hint given of so important a fact. 'A hedge would have been set about this exception to all rules. Would not the Saviour have whispered quietly to the dying man, "You are the only man I am going to treat in this way"?' No, our Lord spoke openly, and those about Him heard what He said. Moreover, the inspired penman has recorded it. If it had been an exceptional case it would not have been written in the Word of God.'

(3) Reunion rests upon the permanence of personality. Through all changes of mind and body something remains which we call 'I'—that is, our personal identity, resting on memory which lends to individuality its chief value. Without memory a man ceases to exist. Sydney Dobell, in his eloquent essay on the Brontës,

refers to the little Jane Eyre's night journey to Lowood. He says :

‘ There is something intensely, almost fearfully, interesting in the diary of a child's feelings. This “ I,” that seems to have no inheritance in the earth, is an eternity with a heritage in all heavens. This “ me,” which is thrown here and there as a thing of nought—the frail, palpitating subject of a schoolboy's tyranny, almost too fragile even to make sport for him—fear not for it. It can endure. This, that trembles at the opening of a parlour-door, quails at the crushing of a china plate, droops amid the daily cuffs and bruises of a household, and faints with fear in a haunted room, will pass alive through portals which the sun dare not enter, survive all kinds of temporal and spiritual wreck, move uninjured among falling worlds, meet undismayed the ghosts of the whole earth, pass undestroyed through the joys of angels—perhaps, also, through anguish which would dissolve the stars.’

As Robertson Smith has said, the relations of person to person are the deepest and truest in human life. Christ Himself yearned for His friends and could not leave them. It is by our own

personality that we can approach His. It is possible for one soul to penetrate into another with such full trust, such full understanding and love, as to make faith something infinitely deeper than the mere balancing of probabilities. Because Christ is Christ and His people are His people, because there is a great and deep love between many who have been parted for the time by death, it is certain that we shall know them in the world of Eternity as we knew them—and far better than we knew them—in the world of Time. What endures is the love and trust that bound us.

(4) It is blessedly true that we shall in the next life find more to know and more to love than has been our lot on earth. Many of us have been very rich in love. We have lived in its atmosphere. We have been rich in faithful and ennobling friendships. But the heart has a great capacity for loving, and without loss of fealty to its early loves it will go on and on in ever-extending affection. And there are not a few who have had very little love. Their lives have been lonely and grey. They have loved Christ, and Christ has cared for them in a very special manner. But among

their fellow-beings there have been few to mark them.

‘ Alas ! that one is born in blight,
Victim of perpetual slight ;
When thou lookest on his face
Thy heart saith, “ Brother, go thy ways !
None shall ask thee what thou doest,
Or care a rush for what thou knowest,
Or listen when thou repliest,
Or remember where thou liest.” ’

Or, to quote another American poet :

‘ If she had—Well ! She longed, and knew not wherefore.

Had the world nothing she might live to care for ?
No second self to say her evening prayer for ? ’

What sweet amends will be made to such lonely pilgrims when they reach the world beyond !

(5) It is important that we should recognise that the life into which we pass at death is not the final form of blessedness. On this we must speak with great reserve. But it would certainly appear that there is a near future for the soul and also a remoter future. Into the near future the soul passes immediately and finds itself most blessed. But beyond the present life of the redeemed in glory there is the resurrection life. Of this we know very little. There are, however, clear intimations

of a time when a body, mysteriously connected with the body laid down in death, shall again clothe the soul, when there will be a general judgment, when Christ shall come again. Robertson Smith says that the goal of our theology is Christ coming again in glory at the head of a spotless Church. He further says : ' To Scripture we must ever turn to realise the true historical Christ till the Risen and Ascended One returns to His people.' How far distant that day may be we cannot tell. But it is a remoter future than the future with which we deal. Meanwhile it is well with our beloved who have passed within the veil. They are in Christ's presence, and under Christ's tuition they are all taught of the Lord, and great is their peace. They have been made ready in ways we do not understand for the final coming of Christ when the number of the years is fulfilled. We may look forward to this wonder, but we can comprehend it very dimly. What we can understand is the safety and the blessedness of the life that Christ has redeemed and restored, the life in which, through Christ, we shall have the most direct access to God the Father, the life of holy and everlasting love.

II

IMMORTALITY WITHOUT GOD

OUR aim is to show that the Easter faith can only live on the Easter sorrow. It will be permanently maintained in the end only by those who believe that this world of time holds as 'chief treasure one forsaken grave.' All the hope of the world is built on the empty tomb, and if the Christ Who was buried did not rise again we have no sure foundation of belief. But it is, or was, possible to believe in immortality, or at least in future reunion with the dead, without believing in Christ or God. The thoughts of the world are turned now to the dead as they never were before, and many false prophets appear and deceive mankind. It is from Him Who was Prophet, Priest, and King that we receive the testimony which the Holy Spirit seals upon the soul.

In this chapter we shall do no more than point out the fact that men who have renounced

Christianity have comforted themselves with the thought of meeting their dead once more under clearer skies. No doubt the difference between those who hold the faith of continuance and those who do not is immense. For, as has been said, if a man is merely a passing phantom and he knows it, he orders his life in one way ; if a pilgrim towards eternity, in quite another. Dr. William Barry prophesied some years ago that all parties, governments, and even religions, will be divided by one clear line between the Mortals and the Immortals—between those who measure values by their relation to death which cuts off hope and those who believe in the life everlasting. The victory of faith is sure. Unbelief, in whatever form it clothes itself, ends at the hateful cypresses which lift themselves above a vanishing world.

I

We begin by taking some examples from a recent book, *The Boyhood of Swinburne*. Swinburne assuredly repudiated Christianity, and he was one of the few great writers who have personally and by name insulted the Lord Jesus Christ. He rejected immortality in very musical verses, but he

could write (to Christians) sometimes in another strain. We take one or two extracts almost at random. The following relates to Victor Hugo. Swinburne writes :—

‘The real loss of friends, the insuperable and irremediable separation, is not, one feels more and more deeply and certainly, that which is made by death—nor yet by difference of opinion or variety of forms of faith and hope—but only by real unworthiness. I am very much gratified by what you tell me of the Bishop’s kind remembrance of me. I hope you will like my little book on the great and good man who always insisted so ardently and earnestly in all his writings on the certainty of immortality and reunion with those we have loved, and, if ever he became at all unjust or less than charitable, became so to those who denied or doubted this. (Not that I think the creator of *Monseigneur Bienvenu* ever was or could have been uncharitable : but I have sometimes thought that he and Mazzini hardly made allowance enough for good and honest and unselfish men who cannot share their faith in personal immortality.)’

Again : ‘When I think of his intense earnestness

of faith in a future life and a better world than this, and remember how fervently Mazzini always urged upon all who loved him the necessity of that belief and the certainty of its actual truth, I feel very deeply that they must have been right—or at least that they should have been—however deep and difficult the mystery which was so clear and transparent to their inspired and exalted minds may seem to such as mine. They ought to have known, if any man ever did : and if they were right, I, whose love and devotion they requited with such kindness as I never could have really deserved, shall (somehow) see them again.'

II

Carlyle cannot be reckoned among the Christians, and yet he had a hope, which ran through his life, of eternal reunion. The religion of Carlyle is a very difficult subject, and we have no space in which to discuss it. Was he a theist ? Hardly. He did not believe that God was to be loved, or reached by prayer. But he said, 'Whoever looks into himself must be aware that at the centre of things is a mysterious demiurgus who is God, and who cannot in the least be adequately spoken of in

any human words.' And he said, 'What we desire to know is, Who is the maker, and what is to come to us when we have shuffled off this mortal coil?' In the *Diary of William Allingham*, a book which contains many precious hints, we have more definite information about Carlyle's rejection of Christianity than anywhere else. He told Allingham about the horror of his mother when he said to her as a boy, 'Did God Almighty come down and make wheelbarrows in a shop?' She lay awake at nights praying and weeping bitterly. 'As a student,' he said, 'I read Gibbon, and then first saw clearly that Christianity was not true.' Carlyle often spoke very theistically, but he was never even sure that there was a Providence, though he clung to the belief as well as he could.

Yet, strange to say, this sceptic maintained from first to last his faith of reunion with the longed-for and the lost. He wrote in 1823 to Jeannie Welsh, who afterwards became his wife: 'With the hope of meeting in a brighter scene of existence, I look upon death as the most inestimable privilege of man. Oh, God! if we are *not* to meet there, if those that are gone from us are but a mockery and lost in everlasting nothingness, wherefore hast Thou

created us at all ?' There followed long, hard, toilsome years, and at the end of them the bright girl who had given him her youth sank into a feeble and delicate old woman and died. She was mourned with a strange mixture of love and remorse. All the world knows of that mourning. When Carlyle, who was then past seventy, gathered his thoughts again, he began to hope for a future meeting with her whose life had known little of the true peace and rest of love. Nothing could take away his thoughts from 'the still country where at last we and our loved ones shall be together again.' When his father died, 'passing from the realm of sleep to that of death,' Carlyle wrote : 'God give me to live to my father's honour and to His. And now, beloved father, farewell for the last time in this world of shadows ! In the world of realities, may the Great Father again bring us together in perfect holiness and perfect love ! Amen !'

III

We choose, as one more example, Henry Thomas Buckle, the author of that brilliant fragment, *The History of Civilisation*. Very serious deductions must be made from some enthusiastic impressions

of readers who were fascinated by its brilliancy. But when all is said and done it is a quickening and stirring book, and has stimulated thoughts in many minds. Buckle passes, not unnaturally, with most people as a sceptic of the most aggressive and blinded type, and no doubt he thought that all we sum up in the word Christianity was a mischievous delusion, to be rejected with scorn. But Buckle borrowed one great clause from the creed which he condemned, and took it for the expression of his heart's deepest yearning. He looked for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. He held that an endless love implied an endless object. To him life would have been impossible without this great faith. Those who read *Pilgrim Memories* to-day will be even more surprised than his first readers, for it is almost safe to say that no one of any intellectual mark holds Buckle's position now.

IV

We say, then, that it has been possible to believe more or less strongly in the persistence of life, in the kindness of the Veiled Energy, and in reunion. Why, it may be asked, should this be impossible ?

It may be urged that those who have not found God in their life here may pass to another life in which God is equally hidden, in which the existence of God is constantly denied. The dark and secret forces that shape the world and the history of the world may prolong the relationships of Time into the relationships of that world where there is Time no longer.

We might say a good deal in reply to this, but it is not necessary. In the eighteenth century men would have little to do with an invisible world, but they clung to their hopes of an invisible home. They detested mysticism and enthusiasm as 'very horrid things,' but they were not prepared to take leave for ever of the beloved dead nor to renounce their own expectation of a happy world. This did not last, and it could not last. For if we pass beyond the natural into the supernatural—as we must, when we believe in immortality—then the supernatural must be a reality in the present as well as in the future; and if our home in the supernatural world is infinitely more important than our brief years in Time, then even now our wisdom is to be found by the engagement of the mind with the Eternal. But we do not believe that philo-

sophical argument, or even Theism, is enough to bear the assaults of death. It is the Risen Christ Who abolished death, and only those who trust in Him hold a safe faith, a faith that will not crumble to dust before the break of day, before the terrors of Time.

III

‘LIFE IN GOD, AND UNION THERE’

WE have already pointed out that the desire for reunion in eternity with those who have left behind them this world of Time is not necessarily a Christian desire. Nor is it true that even the belief in such reunion is necessarily Christian. The faith has been held by many who, if not enemies of the Christian name, would at any rate never claim it. In a biography of the Rev. Donald Sage, minister of Resolis in Ross-shire, written in 1840, we find a very vivid illustration, which we adopt the more readily because such a passage of experience very seldom occurs in Christian literature. Mr. Sage married young, and was devotedly attached to his wife. She was taken from him very soon, and he was in despair, wishing that he might die. He goes on :—

‘ Such a desire came upon me so strongly that I hailed with delight every unsuccessful effort of nature to regain its former position under the

pressure of present weakness, as so many sure precursors of death which would unite me to her from whom I had been so recently and sorely separated. I gradually recovered, however, but still the notion haunted my mind. Then conscience began to ask, "Why did I wish to die?" My sorrows at once responded to the inquiry—"Just to be with Harriet." But, was I sure of that? If Harriet was in Heaven, as I could not but hope that she was, was nothing else to be the consequence of death to me but to go to Heaven merely "to be with her"? I was struck dumb; I was confounded with my own folly. So, then, the only enjoyment I looked for after death was, not to be with Christ, but to be with Harriet! As if Harriet without Christ could make Heaven a place of real happiness to me!

He wrestled with his misery, and when he was almost worn out there flashed into his mind the words, 'I am the Door.' He had peace in Christ, and with that peace came resignation mingled with the old hope now made sure.

I

It is Christian, though not fully Christian, to rest the hope of reunion in eternity on the faith

that God is love, that He is the Author of love, and that He, being the Author, is also the Finisher of love. He does not betray the soul that has found Him so, neither will He put to shame the hopes that have been built on His faithfulness.

Perhaps the chief representative of this school is that great prophet of love and immortality and reunion, Robert Browning. In briefly describing his position we follow with some closeness a very sound article on '*Mysticism in English Poetry*,' written by Dr. Caroline Spurgeon. Dr. Spurgeon says that certain mystics are love-mystics, like Wordsworth. There are philosophical mystics and there are devotional mystics. Browning was a keen dialectician and a very subtle reasoner. But he always appealed from the intellect to that which is beyond intellect. Feeling and intuition he held to be far above knowledge. Mere knowledge will not enable us to reach God. In one of his profounder passages he says :—

'Wholly distrust thy knowledge then, and trust
As wholly love allied to ignorance !
There lies thy truth and safety. . . .

Consider well !

Were knowledge all thy faculty, then God
Must be ignored : love gains Him by first leap.'

These words, 'Love gains Him by first leap,' hold the very heart of Browning. He holds that the object of life is to know God, and that it is only in knowing love that we learn to know God. Love is the meaning of life, and whoever does not learn it, whoever does not live for it, must be eternally lost.

It might be said truly enough that Shelley is also a believer in love as the supreme secret and the master-key of life. But the difference between Shelley and Browning is unbridgeable. Shelley's God is not personal, and he has no belief in individuality. What he expects is not an immortal life, but a mystic merging of his own personality with the universe. On the other hand, in Browning the sense of individuality was supreme. He held with utter and unshaken conviction that there is for each man and woman a persistent life on its upward way, distinct from the temporary coverings it makes use of.

'From first to last of lodging, I was I,
And not at all the place that harboured me.'

Browning had that recognition of personal identity, the bewildering consciousness of the 'I' beneath

all the marvellous changes of body and mind, which is so powerfully expressed by Fitzjames Stephen in his reply to John Stuart Mill: 'All human language, all human observation, implies that the mind, the "I," is a thing in itself, a fixed point in the midst of a world of change, of which world of change its own organs form a part. It is the same yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow.' Stephen goes on to say, 'It seems to me that we are spirits in prison, able only to make signals to each other, but with a world of things to think and speak which our signals cannot describe at all.'

Given, then, a personal God, a God Who is Love, Who bestowed love on His creatures and made them love Him in return, a God Who can be reached only by the stair of love, and given also the persistent individuality which maintains itself through all tamings and subduings and discipline and purifying, and we have a doctrine of recognition and reunion in eternity which, properly understood and fortified, defies denial.

II

As illustrations and confirmations of the doctrine expounded above we make a few extracts from

Browning. We take the first from that mournful drama 'A Blot in the 'Scutcheon.' Mildred says to Tresham, who has killed her lover Henry Merton :—

' Oh true ! There 's nought for me to pardon ! True !
You loose my soul of all its cares at once.
Death makes me sure of him for ever ! You
Tell me his last words ? He shall tell me them,
And take my answer.'

In 'The Ring and the Book,' the dying Pompilia says of her one friend Caponsacchi :—

' O lover of my life, O soldier-saint,
No work begun shall ever pause for death !
Love will be helpful to me more and more
I' the coming course, the new path I must tread—
My weak hand in thy strong hand, strong for
that !'

Again in 'La Saisiaz' :—

' Yes, I knew—but not with knowledge such as thrills
me while I view
Yonder precinct which henceforward holds and hides
the Dear and True.
Grant me (once again) assurance we shall each meet
each some day,
Walk—but with how bold a footstep ! on a way—
but what a way !'

And then take the familiar, dear and immortal lines from ' By the Fireside ' :—

' Think, when our one soul understands
The great Word which makes all things new,
When earth breaks up and heaven expands,
How will the change strike me and you
In the house not made with hands ?

Oh, I must feel your brain prompt mine,
Your heart anticipate my heart,
You must be just before, in fine,
See and make me see, for your part,
New depths of the divine ! '

Browning's convictions were passionately shared by his wife, who in one of her love-letters referred to the views of a friend who had declared herself a materialist. She wrote : ' In the face of those conclusions, she said she was calm and resigned. It is more than I could be, as I confessed. My whole nature would cry aloud against the most pitiful result of the struggle here—a wrestling only for the dust, and not for the crown. What a restless melancholy would fall upon me if I had such thoughts—and what a dreadful indifference ! All grief, to have itself to end in ! All joy, to be based upon nothingness ! All love, to feel eternal separation under and over it ! Dreary and ghastly it

would be. I should not have strength to love you, I think, if I had such a miserable creed. And for life itself—would it be worth holding on such terms, with our blind Ideals making mocks and mows at us wherever we turned? A game to throw up, this life would be, as not worth playing to an end!’

IV

THE CHILDREN OF THE RESURRECTION

WE have written of the faith in eternal reunion as rooted in the confidence that God is a Person, that He is Love, and that His love guarantees the happy immortality of His people. This has sufficed for many who have abandoned, or who have never held, the belief in miracles. And it may as well be said that never at any time in the long history of faith did the outward miracle come first. What was sure was first of all guaranteed by experience. Communion with God, with Christ, is a fact in the consciousness—call it a subjective fact if you will—which cannot be set aside. It is fortified by the long rich experience of the purest and the best, who have held fast to this faith, in ecstasy, in agony, in the long drawn out monotony of the common days.

Surely St. Paul thought after this manner. What

was final to him was the consciousness of Christ within him the hope of glory. But St. Paul also held that the Resurrection was the sure confirmation of his belief—so sure that it became essential. And in face of the facts it may safely be said that the faith in immortality and the Christian redemption cannot survive very long among men if this foundation were to be removed.

I

In these dark days there are some, even of the faithful, who for the time have lost courage and hope. They are with Jesus when round Him there gathered the clouds of a mysterious agony only faintly typified by the darkness of eclipse which hid the material sun in the universe, what time He was dying. But not long will the Children of the Resurrection be kept in prison. They must return to the days of their youth, and they will recover their first hope in the company of the angel who sat in reposeful contemplation within the dark house where the Body of Jesus had lain. That waiting minister of God shows us what the Children of the Resurrection shall be in the fulness of their trust.

II

A sceptic has written :—

‘ Strange, is it not ? that of the myriads who
Before us passed the door of darkness through,
No one returns to tell us of the road,
Which to discover we must travel too.

The revelations of devout and learn’d
Who rose before us, and as prophets burn’d,
Are all but stories which, awoke from sleep,
They told their fellows, and to sleep return’d.’

This would be true if it were not that Jesus revived and rose. If He had never risen, the words ‘ He was crucified, dead, and buried ’ would be the saddest words ever spoken in the world. But the Cross is the throne of power because of the Resurrection. What we rest upon is the fact that the Sacred Body of Jesus Christ rose and left its grave empty. Where was that Sacred Body ? We know very well that if His foes could have produced it, it would have been produced. We know very well that its rising was not expected by the disciples, and that the fact when it first showed itself was met with incredulity, bewilderment, and terror. All attempts to invalidate this evidence, all hypotheses

that deprive it of meaning, must be set aside. The Gospel tells us of our Lord's supernatural entrance into life, and of His supernatural resumption of life when His atoning work was completed.

III

And so it is blessedly true that believers are now to be reckoned as Children of the Resurrection. The Resurrection helps us to understand in some measure their life beyond Jordan. Shall we try to set down some elementary features of that life? It is not a disembodied and ghostlike existence. The redeemed soul is to be clothed in a perfect body, so that in and through all its powers it may serve and glorify God. It attains union with God, such union as can be had by finite beings through the illumination of all their various powers with reinforcements, which we cannot define, of new powers.

It will be, we know, a restful life. There will be none of the old weariness of the heart and anxious struggle, of the fearing and the doubting which were present in the mortal years. It will be a life of praise, but also, most assuredly, a life of action. It will not be, all of it, direct worship, though in a sense all its doings will be acts of worship. Heaven,

we know, resounds with voices of praise, but that is because the dwellers there are so happy in their work, for ever joyful and for ever victorious.

It will be a life of joy. The blessed dead have had too many failures, too many wounds. Heaven will be a place of healing, where God keeps all the treasures that He gave and that we let fall. The spirit will be nourished with constant influxes of divine blessedness and constant new visions of God. The body will know no weariness, will need no repose, will have impressed on it no necessity of dying. All these things are left behind. Most of the saints were very very weary when they sank into their last sleep, but they will never know weariness in the eternity to come.

It will be a life of growth, without limit and without ceasing. The eternal life of the redeemed will never reach a point beyond which no advance is possible. Their life is a perfection, but it is a relative perfection, for it is also, and without limit, a progress. So the blessed dead say with the holy Apostle, 'Not that I have already attained or am already perfect.' In a very fine sentence Canon Mozley points out that the Gospel dared to introduce the element of glory into the destiny of man.

The worthy continuation of existence must be a continuation which is always an ascent.

But chiefly the life of Heaven is a life of unbroken love. God is love, Christ is love, life is love. We make no progress in divine lore until we have mastered that fact. And this is the truth about reunion. In our harsh, fighting, earthly days, love was much to us, but it was limited. It struggled often for expression. It was frequently darkened by misunderstanding, and only now and then did it attain a heavenly completeness. Those times we all look back upon as the only times when we really lived fully and drew the breath of the eternal world. Our beloved dead are waiting as eagerly to tell us their story as we are to tell them ours. We shall be together in days of loyal life when all failures of the past may be forgotten, just as though no break had been at all. How well it is with the dead! How happy we should be if they 'look us through and through'! They are not to be sought in unshared deeps through which their spirits wander fatigued. The companions of the devout life are but removed, as it were, a hand's breadth from us, but they without us shall not be made perfect. We cannot think of them as they were

when sinking under the weight of illness and broken with the burden of the years. Nay, we think of them as satisfied with good things and crowned with lovingkindness, so that their youth is renewed like the eagle's.

V

RENUNCIATION AND REUNION

‘I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s kingdom.

THESE words were uttered by our Lord before Gethsemane. It has been well pointed out that Jesus could then give utterance to words of praise. In Gethsemane He was able only to submit. But it is not enough perhaps to say that the first clause is merely a declaration that death is near—‘It is the last time I shall drink paschal wine with you. I am to die at the Passover.’ Rather we should say that Christ was contemplating the swiftly passing period of His earthly life. This was an utterance of renunciation. He coloured and softened and brightened His words with the thought of reunion—of meeting again. There may be some to whom this message of the Master will come with fresh power in their present time of agony.

I

We have chosen to regard this utterance as our Lord's farewell to all the innocent solaces of life. They had not been many with Him, but they were not entirely wanting. Sometimes He found homes that were sanctuaries of love and peace and cheered Him for a time.

Few, indeed, were these pleasures. He was very poor; often He had nowhere to lay His head; He wore a peasant's robe, a garment without seam. He had little rest, but He did oftentimes pause to pray. He had few friends, but He found refreshment in their company. But whatever there was of these softening elements in His life, He put them at this point solemnly away. True, He was no gloomy ascetic. The Son of Man came eating and drinking. If, with Spurgeon, we take the cup of wine as a symbol of earthly cheer, we understand His deliberate and significant resolve to partake of it no more.

There are multitudes in our time who understand His decision. They may not have voluntarily renounced everything that they once held dear, but their cup of gladness has been taken away never

to be replaced. The human affection which was their joy and stay is with them no more. In place of it has come that heartache which time makes no less painful. Their dreams of a quiet and restful age have been shattered. The homes they had built up by life-long labour are in the dust. Long before they are called upon to give up life itself they are called to renounce what once made life sweet. There was a time when in their daily toil they looked forward to the evening with its quiet recompense of refreshment. But now there is an end.

There was before Christ, as He spoke, His sternest work, and He had to forgo all that hindered its accomplishment. With open eyes and with His whole heart, He prepared Himself to embrace the Cross.

Many of us have our cross to meet. Many of us have met it. For neither are the days what they once were, nor will be. The sunshine of the earlier days for them is dead. They have had that sunshine. They have, it may be, walked joyfully before God and men. Life has come gently to them. Privation, failure, sorrow have been practically unknown. It has seemed as if

the ground were firm beneath their feet and would remain firm. 'In my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved.'

But the war has come—bereaving, bewildering, impoverishing, shaking earth and heaven. The grey sisters of human fate have entered, and they threaten to abide in the house for ever. Disease and loss and pining care overwhelm the sufferers. They may live to resume their activities, to adapt themselves to changes, but they can never be the same again. It is well to recognise it, to put away and to renounce the old hopefulness and rejoicing, so far as it had to do with time. We have learned how fragile our happiness was, but duty remains and love.

The young will have to bear the burdens and confront the problems of a saddened time. Thank God there is a resilience in youth. It has a power of recovery save in special cases. Life's morning radiance cannot be wholly scattered. New joys, new friendships, new lives are possible, and we reverently adore the mercy of God in sending them. But we write rather for those who are in the afternoon, or in the evening, and who know that their sorrows have gone down to the springs of life.

There are for such a new sense of God and Christ, a truer communion, the experience of a soul knitted, as it never was in free and careless days, to the sufferings of humanity. These are our solaces, but there are more, and one in especial which comforted our Lord. This was the assurance of reunion.

II

Our Lord's renunciation was in a manner compensated for by His certainty of reunion. He went on, 'Until the day when I drink it new *with you* in My Father's kingdom.'

With you. The teaching of our Lord, read and interpreted, is based on the assurance of a reunion in eternity. Of all the Father has given to the Son He has lost not one. He will never lose one. Wherever and however His people die, they pass straight to Him.

But for the moment our Lord is not thinking of a heaven peopled with the crowding guests of God. He is thinking of the little band who have been nearest Him in His earthly life. They are to be as near to Him in the new country—perhaps nearest to Him of all—and He is to be close to them. They

shall eat and drink and rejoice and praise together. He is to be as happy with His people as His people are with Him. The wine cup they drink with Christ in heaven is an emblem of an endless and unpolluted joy.

So we move on to this rapture. It draws nearer and nearer. It is hard for us to interpret the mystery of God's wise and holy providence. It would be impossible, if the hope that is sure and steadfast were destroyed.

It is not destroyed, but confirmed. Let troubled and lonely hearts take fresh courage. They may have to go softly all their years. The voices that once thrilled them are for the moment past hearing. But when death brings us closer to God we shall know that He has been in all ways just and faithful and loving to us. With what a rush our spirits will run to reunite themselves with the beloved ! They, too, will make haste to meet us, and in utter thankfulness and humility we with them shall claim the Redeemer as our Lord and Friend, and fall at the feet of perfect Goodness, perfect Purity, and perfect Love.

VI

‘THEY WITHOUT US’

‘THEY without us’ and with God—how do they regard us now ? We know what life is to us without them. But to-night as they sing their Evensong at the foot of the Eternal Throne, are they touched by the sense of our necessities and longings on earth ? How do those who have crossed the sea of life look upon their old companions who are still tossing on its stormy tide ?

For answer let us remember how Christ behaved Himself when He was about to pass into the higher lands of God. He knew what awaited Him in the other world. The splendour and the peace of eternal life had been His before the world began. Did He then carry Himself as One indifferent to those He was leaving, as One who was to forget them and content Himself in a higher fellowship ? Behold, how He loved them ! As He gazed out into the glory of the Father, His thought was still

for them. Beneath the magic significant night, silent with excess of meaning, He said, ' In my Father's house are many mansions : I go to prepare a place for you.' He asked to be remembered, and He promised to return : ' This do in remembrance of me. . . . Ye do show the Lord's death till He come.' If Christ on the steps of the throne dearly prized the remembrance of those He left behind, if Christ's concern with the world did not end with His dying, did not end even with His ascension, surely the same is true of those who had no life before this, to whom heaven was a strange place, who bore into it no loves except those which began on earth.

Phillips Brooks has said that the haunting fear of the disciples during the days of our Lord's flesh must have been that He would leave them. Two friends begin life together. They sit side by side at the village school, on the college bench, and in due time they go out into the world. A few years, and one has greatly distanced the other. He has shown more various powers, greater energy, quicker apprehension. His mind has become familiar with the regions of which his old companion knows nothing. The ancient friendship may be kept up,

but an element of pain has entered it. One feels that his friend has passed into other experiences, has gone whither he cannot come. In other words, his friend has left him in the spirit, if not outwardly. Of two comrades, one discovers the glory of Christ, the other remains in blindness, and the two spirits cannot again enter into free and rich communion. Christ, as the disciples saw, was rising higher. The interval between Him and them seemed to widen. Near as He might be, there was an infinite separateness which fell ever and anon on all their relations. There was a fear, which He was at last to confirm, that He would depart from this mortal life, and that His visible presence would vanish from their eyes. The last distress was but the culmination of many misgivings that had gone before it. The disciples kept thinking that they were not lovable, that Christ, Who knew them, Who was so far above them, could not be touched by any abiding affection for men so ignorant, so sinful, so weak as they.

This was because they did not understand the meaning of love. A thoughtful writer has said that one of the last lessons life teaches is the difference between love and admiration. At first we believe that they are the same, and think that we prize

love when we are really exulting in admiration. But heaven is the world of love, not the world of admiration. The disciples rejoiced when men admired them, when the spirits were subject unto them. At the outset of His work, Jesus Himself was tempted to accept admiration at the cost of love. He rejected it, and had to make the most of such love as was given Him, for of admiration He had very little from His puzzled and stammering followers. Indeed, as the same writer remarks, love is hard to express ; one must master half a dozen languages besides that of the tongue before he can render it. Admiration is a pungent, concentrated, unmistakable thing, and men drink it in as the elixir of life. Doubtless, when admiration is sincere, it elevates those who give it, and it may greatly help and quicken those who receive it. It is the starved heart that does not know what it is generously to admire. Multitudes of men and women would have acquitted themselves more worthily if they had received at the right time the encouragement they had earned. Still, admiration will not compare with love. Admiration at the best takes hold of something which is not the essence of the soul. Admiration is based too often

on the power to do brilliant things. Admiration may have even a lower foundation than that ; it may rise or fall with the appreciation of the world. So long as a man succeeds, it follows him. Whenever he appears to fail, even though the apparent failure may be an actual triumph, it turns away in disappointment. Love does not depend on anything external ; love does not ask the opinion of others ; love lays hold of the heart and clings to it. It attaches itself to what endures, rejoices, not that the spirits are subject to the dear one, but rather is glad because his name is written in heaven. ' Love beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.' Love can survive straining and bruising ; admiration is brittle. Admiration replaces one ideal very easily by another. Love cannot forget. It holds the door open for new-comers, but it lets no guest pass out. Admiration is the spectator that turns away when its eyes are feasted. Love is the communicant at the table of a perpetual sacrament.

Now the misgiving of the disciples was due in part at least to this confusion between admiration and love. Very likely when Jesus chose them they imagined that He saw something in them the

world had missed, that He admired some gift of force, or eloquence, or courage, or wisdom. As the parting hour drew near, this illusion wholly vanished. They saw that He was infinitely above them. The one possible consolation was that He loved them, that He would not cease, that He could not cease, loving them wherever He went. The whole burden of His sacred farewell was an assurance of this. He expounded to them the deep mystery of love, constant for evermore. He told them that true love was union, that by union His people were part of Himself, that seeing they were knit to Him they must follow Him wherever He went. He was to rise higher, but He rose to raise them. The forces of His heavenly power were to be spent for this, and He could not see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied till the Church was with Him in glory. So we know that the last, the least, the weakest, is awaited at the fountains of life.

Now we can answer our question, and silence our misgiving. ' They without us shall not be made perfect ': ' they without us ' could not, if we might dare to say it, be made perfect even by the love of God. The perfection of the blessed dead cannot be achieved till the living they wait for come. We

feel that we are not worthy now to loose their shoe-latchet, or to touch their garments' hem ; but since love is love, that must not trouble us. While they complete themselves in regions beyond our view, we are to remember them, to look for them, to prepare for them. We must try to keep the straight path, so far as we can see it, to seek that we may reach the spirit-land unsoiled and noble. They remember us, they wait for us, they will welcome us. They are saying, if we had ears to hear, ' Dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and my crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.'

VII

BETWEEN BEREAVEMENT AND REUNION

THERE is an interval, long or short, between bereavement and reunion. This is the hardest part of life to hearts that know the mystery of love. At first it seems as if all had lost its savour. Black cold winters are succeeded by grey dead summers. The yearning for sunshine and rest cannot be satisfied. It often seems as if heart and energy must die under the depressing influence of continued gloom.

But the faithful are not left without aid or without duties. They are suffered indeed almost to break their hearts over those whom they love and lose. They sorrow, and it is right they should sorrow, but they must not sorrow as those who have no hope. They are not left without the succours and the counsels of grace.

I

At first bereavement has a paralysing effect, and when the heart revives it fastens on the beloved dead. This is wise and right and inevitable. Death deepens our knowledge of the departed. Whatever marred or hindered the full manifestation of the beautiful soul ceases to be remembered. We idealise, it may be said, but the ideal is truer than the real. In this dim world of cloud and care we often fail to recognise our angels till they are taken from our earthly sight. It also happens often, especially in times like these, that they display in their last months or years qualities of heroism and nobility of sacrifice with which they were not credited. We then know still more deeply how great the gift was which we possessed for a season and have not lost for ever. It is greatly wise to meditate on our crowned and sainted dead. We may not wisely say much in the new dust of the sudden blow that has struck us, but we may go to our friends and speak softly with closed doors and behold through their clearer eyes what treasures were in the hearts that have been stilled. It is not well to be lavish with our confidence. It is not

well to put our grief into many words. But we think of the blessed as they spring up full-statured and transfigured in the light of the other world, and we know them for what they are. We should cultivate their spiritual presence. Their pictures, now sanctified by death, should hang upon our walls. We should live to be what they would wish us to be, to do what they would wish us to do. Indeed, for a time this is often the only comfort. We have but one desire, and that is to make life a straight, quick, thoughtful journey in the path which their feet have pressed. We seek to be worthy of them, and we are held up to that which is highest in us by the force of their example. They have reached the spirit-land victorious and pure, and we are fain to follow.

Nor should we forget that they in their blessedness are not forgetting us. That is a strange, deep word of the Apostle, 'They without us.' He further says that 'they without us shall not be made perfect.' How this is to be understood we cannot fully know. 'I was not worthy to see the blessed grieve. That is a sight upon which the angels look with awe and which brings those tears which are salvation into the eyes of God.' We do

not know what the real spiritual world is like, nor do we know the supreme force of the affections of those who live in it. What we do know is that as long as we are grieving hopelessly for them their happiness must be troubled. The opaque and earthly habits which divide the life of the body from that of the spirit forbid us to go far, but we may be sure that our sorrow for the dead has their true sympathy and, may it be, their profound compassion.

For we are to rejoice in their blessed change. Our eyes dazzle as we think that they died young. But the fragmentariness of all human life as it flashes into the unknown is plain to us. We are saved by our implicit faith in that which will complete the fragment and orb it into something which has a meaning.

II

We are to use all that Christ gives us in the way of consolation. In all our affliction Christ is afflicted. Friends are often helpless as they see the blow descend, and the agony is endured by the suffering soul, and Christ shares its agony. We are to dwell under the everlasting and living Cross of

choosing in all things God's will rather than our own. The will of God is to be heartily accepted when it crucifies, even as it is accepted when it heals and gladdens. Those days of triumphant affection and pride are over. We rejoiced in them, and we did well. It is for Christ to teach us to bow, as He Himself bowed, to the better will of God, and the will of God was that He should be crucified between the thieves.

Is it granted to us to have actual communion with the dead before the reunion? We have no distinct revelation, and yet 'in clear dream and solemn vision' much may be granted to the soul. Christ holds the dead by His right hand and His left hand holds ours. Is it possible that new currents of covenanting love may pass through Him from one to the other? How many can speak of sudden upliftings, touches, guidances, which seem to come from the ancient love?

But it becomes us to speak with caution. Mrs. Oliphant in her beautiful little book, *The Beleaguered City*, shows how difficult it is to establish any real intercourse between the seen and the unseen. There is the spiritual faith and the purified affection of the higher human natures, and that may mean

something of intercourse. But it is vain to break by mere marvels through the barriers that separate our world of sense and the present from the land of eternal things. She shows us how little beyond fear the supernatural world would be able to inspire the hearts of those who live in to-day, even if it were permitted to invade them.

III

To be tired of life is to be tired for want of life. But many of the bereaved are utterly weary. They should do their best to recover an interest in life. They should not, if they can help it, give up work. We are not speaking of the young, who have the opportunities and hopes of the future, whose natures are resilient. But those who grow old can never hope to be again all that they were. There is a healthful weariness of fatigue and exhaustion after hard work. But there is a form of weariness due to sorrow which exceeds natural power and endurance, and must be alleviated. In this weariness the stronger and nobler motives of past days seem to have vanished or to have lost command. The sufferers are discouraged and disheartened before they enter the lists. They cannot win their

souls in patience by drawing strength out of the struggle. It may be the highest wisdom in them to recognise that even with a spiritual support they must change their way of living. There are pleasures they must resign, there are tasks for which they are no longer fit. But they will find new fields to be cultivated, new opportunities for sympathy if fewer for achievement. They will learn to expect less in this world, but to meditate more on the next. They will battle less and help more. They will make more opportunity for intercession, and especially they will plead for those who are in the midst of the strife. The fulness of life can be found in quiet forms and in sequestered places. Desires have to be carefully limited. There must be reticence and moderation in earthly plans and duties. But compensation will not be wanting. The mystic cloud of hope will begin to glow. The saintly love of the divine world—its peace and light and beatitude will disclose themselves more and more fully. The hope that maketh not ashamed will be seen to spring from a divine source, and point to a divine goal.

VIII

THE REUNION OF SOULS : TENNYSON

TENNYSON'S *In Memoriam* is perhaps the most profound and beautiful treatment of the reunion of souls that is to be found anywhere. It has been described as worthy to be placed on the same list with the *Oresteia*, the *Divina Commedia*, and *Faust*. It may be affirmed that Tennyson and Browning saved the higher poetry of their own era from despair. They touch the dreariest landscape with a beam of living hope. Shelley's despair is calm and constant. Clough and Arnold are often nearly as sorrowful, but here and there we find in their writings an undertone of faith.

We believe, and hope to show, that *In Memoriam* is a deeply Christian book. But its appeal has been universal. Mr. Wilfrid Ward tells us that Huxley once spoke strongly of 'the insight into scientific method shown in Tennyson's *In Memoriam*,' and pronounced it to be equal to that of the greatest

experts. Huxley wrote to Sir Michael Foster : ' He was the only modern poet, I think the only poet, since Lucretius, who has taken the trouble to understand the work and tendency of the men of science.' Tennyson knew the terror of that process of selection which science has established, but his faith in the ' strong Son of God ' was victorious over all his fears. He viewed present and future in a mystic cloud of hope.

That *In Memoriam* is by no means an easy book is admitted by all real students. There are snatches of beauty that appeal at once to every sorrowful heart, but the full beauty and significance of the book can be understood only by exact study. In particular, the general scheme of the elegies can be discerned, and we are thereby enabled to follow the gradual course of the poet's thought. A model commentary is that of Dr. A. C. Bradley, and there are other books, noticeably those by Professor Sneath and Thomas Davidson, which are rich in suggestion. They bring us to the conclusion that Tennyson gradually works his way to the grand truth of the reunion of souls. It has to be kept in mind that the poem is inspired by a passionate grief and affection. The struggle with sorrow

is prolonged, and it is personal. In this way it is differentiated from the great elegies on Edward King and Keats and Clough. But it is equally important to observe that for all his grief the poet was able through months and years to portray the stages and the phases of his inward battle. His loss was not one of those which tear the heart asunder and set a seal of silence on the lips—

‘ Yet I bear it and am bearing,
Only do not ask me how.’

We desire to discuss with as much brevity as is possible the foundations of Tennyson’s thought and the progress traceable in the book towards a strengthened faith in the reunion of souls parted by death.

I

As to Tennyson’s general assumptions, we agree with those who find in him a poetical statement of Kantian ideas. Kant furnished to mankind a sort of final analysis of the philosophical movement up to his time. In his *Critique of Pure Reason* he is agnostic. He teaches that the mind cannot know the real world. But in treating of ‘Practical

Reason ' Kant restores to us that which he has taken away. In a word, he finds God, Freedom and Immortality, given to us in terms of consciousness. They cannot be proved, but they are essential factors in our inmost being. Tennyson grew gradually towards that creed till he made it completely his own. But he enriched it by a certain mystic contemplation through which he appeared at times to rise to that state of Oriental enlightenment when the body is forgotten and the soul dwells in the paradise of purity and light. Tennyson held, with Kant, that we can only 'know' phenomena, but that we can reach and must reach the transcendental objects of religion by faith. Poems like *In Memoriam*, *The Two Voices*, and *The Ancient Sage* are built on this basis. It must not be supposed that Tennyson's belief lay outside the intellectual circuits. 'Believe,' says Browning, 'and the whole argument breaks up.' The argument, however, does not break up because thought is suppressed. Rather we say that thought is lifted into the higher region of imaginative reason. 'Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.' It is, as has been finely said, the shimmer of the distant jasper towers

of the City of God. We commend to those who wish to see this subject worked out Professor Sneath's admirable little book on *The Mind of Tennyson*.

II

We come to a more difficult subject when we track the onward progress of Tennyson's thought in the poem. We must not press inferences too hard. *In Memoriam* came into being by a piecemeal process. We know that some of the elegies date from 1833, while others were written a dozen years later. Dr. Bradley does not contend for any rigid division of the poem into parts. He admits that 'the content of some of the later sections implies a greater distance of time from the opening of the series than is suggested by the chronological scheme.' Also Tennyson himself late in life gave a scheme of the poem to Mr. Knowles which varies in one important point from that of Dr. Bradley. It is, however, quite certain, in spite of Tennyson's forgetfulness, that in the final form *In Memoriam* is intended to cover an ideal period of something less than three years. The changes in the poet's mind are marked chiefly by the Christmas sections, but

also by other recurring seasons and anniversaries. There are other points also which may be described as certain :—

1. The poet himself tells us that the divisions are made by the Christmastide sections xxviii., lxxviii., civ. The time said to elapse in the poem may be set down at rather less than three years. It may be said in passing that Tennyson may have meant to assign a span to grief, and there are other suggestions of the same kind. But it is with his general thinking that we are concerned. If the reader will follow the divisions as made by Dr. Bradley, he will see how the poet conceives the 'Way of the Soul.' In sections i. to xxvii.—up to the first Christmas—we have the first part, for a space of three months, assigned to absorption in grief, looking back upon years of friendship, affirming that love should survive the loss of the beloved, but with little reference to the continued existence of the lost friend.

2. In the second part—sections xxviii. to lxxvii.—the idea of the continued life of the dead is very prominent, and the question of future reunion is raised. The remembrance of the early life in the world beyond death is strongly affirmed. There

is a passionate desire for the nearness of the dead companion.

3. The next part, to the third Christmas—lxxviii. to ciii.—deals with the possible contact of the living and the dead, apparently realised in a trance—xcv. The tone is that of quiet and not unhappy retrospection, and there is a sense of new and joyful life beginning to show itself.

4. In the last part, from the third Christmas—sections civ. to cxxxi.—the poet wins his victory. The regret passes away, but love grows and widens. The poet resolves to turn from the grief of the past. The sections are full of faith in the future, both of the individual and of humanity. The poet has won his way to entire faith in the omnipotence of love. His conclusion is that souls may unite and will unite perfectly when each is beyond death. Meanwhile love is not less but greater than before. It changes, but it does not perish or fade. It has become spiritual and transfigured. At the beginning love desires the lost friend unchanged and entire. It longs for the material manifestations,

‘ the touch of a vanished hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still.’

The soul shrinks from thinking of a phantom, ‘ a

spirit and not a breathing voice,' instead of the human-hearted man he loved. But gradually the soul conquers sense. It is released from the desire for that which is really dead, and turns to that which is not dead. The interest in the beloved is transferred from the sensible presence to the soul itself, and 'the soul is no longer thought of as a mere awful phantom, but has become what the living friend has been, something both beloved and loving.' The beauty of the beloved soul is to be seen in a life that can be but dimly imagined. The haunting desire for the bodily presence retires, and the feeling that the soul of the dead is something shadowy and awful departs for ever. This releases the mourner from his preoccupation and his sorrow. He can interest himself in other things, in new friendships, in the sweetness of the spring, in the mighty hopes for man's future.

We have so far closely followed the wise guidance of Dr. Bradley, generally using his own words. One important aspect, however, of the question he has not handled, and we must deal with it in our next chapter. It is a great thing when the soul is content with spiritual reunion, which means immediate and conscious reunion after death.

IX

MORNWARD: THE REUNION OF SOULS

WE return to the teaching of *In Memoriam* on certain questions affecting the reunion of souls.

I

There are firm believers in immortality and reunion who hold the doctrine that the soul is asleep in the interval between death and the resurrection. As consciousness is lost while that period lasts there is no weariness of waiting. The fire of the divine life is quenched in death till it is relit on the Resurrection Day. Uncounted years may pass ere the consummation, but they pass in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.

Against this view the Church as a whole has decisively pronounced. It is true that one of the most subtle exponents of the Christian redemption, Dora Greenwell, inclined to hold it. In her prose

works, however, she has little to say on human sorrow, and much on human sin and the atoning merits of Christ. Writing on the Resurrection she says : ‘ How much has the human heart gained in the One revelation, which enables it to say, “ I believe in the resurrection of the body ” ; that gives the flesh also leave “ to rest in hope.” It is this belief which brings with it all that is actual and personal into our future life ; all, too, that is homely and familiar ; that gives us back our friends, looking and talking as they did here ; gives us back our feelings and occupations, in fact, our lives. For the body is, after all, the home of the soul, endeared, even like the actual home, by the very sorrows that have been endured within it ; and we can conceive of nothing entered upon in separation from it that is worthy to be called life.’

It should, however, be remembered that mind does not depend on matter. God Himself is a pure Spirit, and man as a spirit is of the same nature. The soul is active and conscious when absent from the body and present with the Lord. The personal individual existence of the soul is continued after the death and dissolution of the

body. The drift of the New Testament is plain. The souls that are passed from us do not sink at death into a lower stage of existence than that which they enjoyed in the flesh. 'To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise,' were Christ's words to the penitent thief. When St. Paul said that he had a desire to 'depart and to be with Christ, which is very far better,' he contemplated his passage into a more exalted state. As soon as he departed he was with Christ in a more blessed, intimate and near association than while he was a pilgrim on earth. Jeremy Taylor says : 'Paradise is distinguished from the heaven of the blessed ; being itself a receptacle of holy souls, made illustrious with visitation of angels, and happy by being a repository for such spirits, who, at the day of judgment, shall go forth into eternal glory.' Again he says : ' I have now made it as evident as questions of this nature will bear, that in the state of separation the spirits of good men shall be blessed and happy souls.'

There is one piece in *In Memoriam* where for a moment Tennyson seems to incline towards a belief in the interval of unconsciousness. We quote xliii. :—

‘ If Sleep and Death be truly one,
And every spirit’s folded bloom
Thro’ all its intervital gloom
In some long trance should slumber on ;

Unconscious of the sliding hour,
Bare of the body, might it last,
And silent traces of the past
Be all the colour of the flower ;

So then were nothing lost to man ;
So that still garden of the souls
In many a figured leaf enrolls
The total world since life began ;

And love will last as pure and whole
As when he loved me here in Time,
And at the spiritual prime
Rewaken with the dawning soul.’

Tennyson’s own commentary must be given :—

‘ If the immediate life after death be only sleep, and the spirit between this life and the next should be folded like a flower in a night slumber, then the remembrance of the past might remain, as the smell and colour do in the sleeping flower ; and in that case the memory of our love would last as true, and would live pure and whole within the spirit of my friend until it was unfolded at the

breaking of the morn, when the sleep was over.'

Surely the 'spiritual prime' is the dawn of the Resurrection! But the thought is no integral or essential part of his intuitions and arguments. He feels the need of present possession. He is assured that his friend is the object of a personal love. He looks to an immediate contact of souls without appealing to sense. The thought that while he was travelling through a long tract of years his friend's spirit was buried in a deep slumber would be impossible for him. He lived and loved and waited for a reunion, but something of the reunion was vouchsafed to him as he continued in the pilgrim's way.

II

Mr. A. C. Benson, in a little book on Tennyson, argues that the poem is not Christian because it has nothing to say about the Resurrection. 'There is,' says Mr. Benson, 'no allusion in the whole poem to the Resurrection, the cardinal belief of Christianity, the very foundation-stone of Christian belief; the very essence of consolation, of triumph over death, of final victory. It is impossible that

one who was a Christian in the strictest sense should not have recurred again and again to this thought in a poem which deals from first to last with death and hope.' In reply we would say, again : God and Immortality are to the poet matters not of proof but of faith. But is it not true, as Canon Deane has pointed out, that the Resurrection doctrine is implicit in the poem ? Take a stanza from lxxxiv., describing the meeting of the two souls after death, when they would

‘ Arrive at last the blessed goal,
And He that died in Holy Land
Would reach us out the shining hand,
And take us as a single soul.’

This is the living act of the hand of Him Who not merely lived but ‘ *died* in Holy Land.’ Does it not involve the doctrine that He is risen ? There is also the great poem beginning,

‘ Strong Son of God, immortal Love.’

Was Tennyson ever in any doubt that Christ died, and rose again, and sat down at the right hand of God ? He surely held the essence of the faith in the Resurrection, which is that Christ is conscious and supreme. Tennyson’s faith in the Resurrection

is expressed in various ways, perhaps most clearly at the conclusion of the 'Holy Grail':

'In moments when he feels he cannot die,
And knows himself no vision to himself,
Nor the high God a vision, nor that One
Who rose again.'

Speaking of these last three lines Tennyson says they are 'the (spiritually) central lines in the *Idylls*.' The heart of it all is here—'*that One Who rose again.*'

III

But the greatest service done by Tennyson to lonely and bereaved spirits is his noble insistence on the individuality of God and the soul. He holds the fundamental truth of personal religion, which is that God presents Himself as *Thou* to *me*. The wandering scholar, Thomas Davidson, who is on such a point an unimpeachable witness, may be quoted here. He points out that Tennyson repudiated the notion that at death the individual soul loses its identity, 'remerging in the general soul'—a 'faith as vague as all unsweet.' 'It satisfies neither hand nor heart. It teaches that the Infinite and Absolute Being is utterly without form or

determination, and all forms, or individuals, appearing in the universe are mere temporary illusions. This doctrine, which leads men to seek the annihilation of Self, as a deluding phantasm, has several times tried to insinuate itself into Western thought ; for example, through the Arabs in the twelfth century, and at present, in the form of Monism, and as the outcome of physical science. Indeed, in all cases the doctrine has its origin in thought carried on in terms of physics. Against it the Church, holding fast to the Aristotelian doctrine of the eternity of forms, has always exerted herself to the utmost, and for a very good reason. Since, in mediæval terminology, the rational or intellectual soul is the “substantial form” of the body, if forms are not eternal then the soul is not immortal. We might almost say that herein lies the fundamental distinction between the thought of the East and that of the West.

“Eternal form shall still divide
The eternal soul from all beside,
And I shall know him when we meet.”

In the spiritual world there will still be distinction of persons, still fellowship, still love ; and however

far isolation may be lost, as souls enter into closer union, it will be lost in light, not in darkness. As St. Bernard puts it : “ The substance (of the individual) will remain, but in other form, other glory, other power. . . . So to be affected is to be deified.” ’

This is the quintessence of the whole argument :—

‘ I shall know him when we meet.’

X

‘LOVE BADE ME WELCOME’

THIS is perhaps all we know about the entrance of our beloved into the everlasting doors. It is enough. We should want no more. George Herbert is not without some justification in carrying the story a little further to the speech of the frail and trembling spirit to its Redeemer :—

‘ Love bade me welcome ; yet my soul drew back,
Guilty of dust and sin,
But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack
From my first entrance in,
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning
If I lack’d anything.

“ A guest,” I answer’d, “ worthy to be here ” ;
Love said, “ You shall be he.”

“ I, the unkind, ungrateful ? Ah, my dear,
I cannot look on Thee.”

Love took my hand, and smiling did reply,
“ Who made the eyes but I ? ” ’

There are some things which may be said with

absolute certainty about the experiences of the second life.

I

In the first place, the faithful soul is received by Christ to the life which is all love. In spite of the emphatic teaching of Scripture the Church as a whole has not risen to the height of the great declaration, 'God is Love.' Neither has it sung with full conviction St. Paul's praise of charity. But the higher teachers of the human race, and even those who never formally identified themselves with Christians, have said glorious things and true things about the Love that masters Time and gives of the radiance of its joy to those who would otherwise go poor indeed. George Meredith says in one of his strongest and most sinewy passages :—

'Is it any waste of time to write of love? The trials of life are in it, but in a narrow ring and a fierier. You may learn to know yourself through it, as you do after years of life, whether you are fit to lift those that are about you, or whether you are but a cheat and a load on the backs of your fellows. The impure perishes, the inefficient languishes, the

moderate comes to its autumn of decay—these are of the kind which aim at satisfaction to die of it soon or late. The love that survives has strangled craving; it lives because it lives to nourish and succour like the heavens.'

We can penetrate but a very little way into Christ's manner of working and teaching with His saints in Paradise. May we not suppose that He teaches the redeemed to love God as they have never loved Him before? In one of his last articles Dr. Marcus Dods said that very few religious writers had a passionate love for God, and he put St. Augustine higher than the rest in this respect. But God Himself has made Christianity historic in making Himself a Man. Our Blessed Lord, as the poor Scotch girl said, was a real Man, and lived a real life, and died a real death, and behold He is alive for evermore! As Dora Greenwell has said, 'Everything in Christianity, even the blessed Cross itself, stops too short, if we stop short at it, and do not let it lead us back to the Father—that *righteous Father*, Whom our Lord declared that He alone knew, and would reveal to a world that knows Him not. It often seems to me that Christianity has still a great advance to make in

this direction ; when we consider the deep unrighteousness, such as slavery in its various forms, still tolerated in many Christian countries, also in almost all forms of political and commercial thought, what a denial there is of the great primitive principles of justice and morality.' Jesus will yet show us the Father, and it shall suffice us. We shall understand then, as we do not understand now, what it meant for God the Father to give His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

We need not go over again the teaching of Browning on the subject. We know that he was a believer in the Incarnation and in Immortality because he was a believer in Love. It is he who teaches most clearly the sacrifice of true love and its continuance hereafter. In the Being of God the one essential fact that he finds is Love.

‘ In youth I looked to these very skies,
And, probing their immensities,
I found God there, His visible power ;
Yet felt in my heart, amid all its sense
Of the power, an equal evidence
That His love, there too, was the nobler dower.
For the loving worm within its clod
Were diviner than a loveless god
Amid his worlds, I dare to say.’

We content ourselves with quoting the familiar and grand lines in *Saul*, which describe the entrance into heaven and the meeting with God :

' 'Tis the weakness in strength that I cry for ! my
flesh, that I seek
In the Godhead ! I seek and I find it. O Saul,
it shall be
A Face like my face that receives thee ; a Man like
to me
Thou shalt love and be loved by for ever : a Hand
like this hand
Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee ! See
the Christ stand ! '

II

We will mention next the blessed promise of Rest which Christ made in His earthly life and has fulfilled for many even in this world of fear and care. But it will be more perfectly and absolutely the joy of the blessed. Somehow this conception of Rest has dropped out lately, and yet if we told the full truth to one another should we not confess that nothing is so good as rest ? Think of the unrest which for years has been tearing at our hearts. Think of the difficult and impoverished life which so many have to lead. Think what multitudes are so sick of war that they would

almost throw up their arms and yield in any circumstances. Even in the normal course of the world most men come home from their work tired to find their wives tired. There is a great deal of courage in the human heart, and it is certain that Christ succours those who pray. And yet the promise of rest is very sweet.

Let us understand what rest is. Rest is not mere inaction. It is not realised by those whose simple longing is to escape. No, that is not what was promised by Christ. Rest is not mere negative repose, but positive, fulfilled calm and satisfaction. Henry Drummond has written truly and beautifully about Christian rest :

‘ It is only when we see what it was in Him that we can know what the word Rest means. It lies not in emotions, nor in the absence of emotions. It is not a hallowed feeling that comes over us in church. It is not something that the preacher has in his voice. It is not in nature, nor in poetry, nor in music—though in all these there is soothing. It is the mind at leisure from itself. It is the perfect poise of the soul ; the absolute adjustment of the inward man to the stress of all outward things ; the preparedness against every emergency ;

the stability of assured convictions ; the eternal calm of an invulnerable faith ; the repose of a heart set deep in God. It is the mood of the man who says with Browning, " God 's in His Heaven, all 's right with the world." '

If the new country is the world of Love and Rest many things follow. There will be the love of human beings to one another. There will be their love to God. There will be praise, for that will be the appropriate speech of the soul in the immediate keeping of Jesus. 'Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father ; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.' Needless to say also there will be such exercise of the strengthened and calmed faculties as God sees good. Still the redeemed will look beyond and beyond to the Beatific Vision of God—which we can name indeed, but beyond naming can do no more.

XI

DANTE AND REUNION

‘ Beatrice is gone up into high Heaven,
The kingdom where the angels are at peace ;
And lives with them.’

*La Vita Nuova.*¹

Dante, in the *Vita Nuova*, thus imagined his lady’s heavenly state :—

‘ But from the height of woman’s fairness, she,
Going up from us with the joy we had,
Grew perfectly and spiritually fair ;
That so she spreads even there
A light of Love which makes the angels glad,
And even unto their subtle minds can bring
A certain awe of profound marvelling.’¹

‘ Look thou into the pleasure wherein dwells
Thy lovely lady who is in Heaven crown’d,
Who is herself thy hope in Heaven, the while
To make thy memory hallow’d, she avails ;
Being a soul within the deep Heaven bound,
A face on thy heart painted, to beguile
Thy heart of grief which else should turn it vile.
Even as she seem’d a wonder here below,
On high she seemeth so,—
Yea, better known, is there more wondrous yet,
And even as she was met

¹ Rossetti’s translation.

First by the angels with sweet song or smile,
Thy spirit bears her back upon the wing,
Which often in these ways is journeying.'

Cino da Pistoia to Dante Alighieri on the death
of Beatrice Portinari. (Rossetti's translation.)

'This realm secure and all its gladness,
Crowded with ancient people and with modern,
Unto one mark had all its look and love.
O Trinal Light, that in a single star
Sparkling upon their sight so satisfies them,
Look down upon our tempest here below !'¹

'I know not in the world,' says Carlyle, 'an affection equal to that of Dante. It is a tenderness, a trembling, longing, pitying love: like the wail of Æolian harps, soft, soft; like a child's young heart;—and then that stern, sore-saddened heart! These longings of his towards his Beatrice; their meeting together in the *Paradiso*; his gazing in her pure, transfigured eyes, her that had been purified by death so long, separated from him so far:—one likens it to the song of angels; it is among the purest utterances of affection, perhaps the very purest, that ever came out of a human soul.'²

THE *Divina Commedia* is a poem of recognition, and in its later stages of reunion. Scarcely has Dante crossed the threshold of the unseen when he is met by Virgil, the master and guide of his youth. Virgil appears as a messenger from Beatrice. The lady throned in Paradise has remembered her faithful lover on earth, and has sent him a deliverer. She

¹ Dante's *Paradiso*, Canto xxxi.

² *Heroes and Hero-Worship*.

has left her place in Heaven beside the ancient Rachel, and has laid her commands on the Latin poet. For Dante's sake she entered the dark portals of the Inferno 'with no dread.'

'I am so fram'd by God, thanks to His grace !
That any suff'rance of your misery
Touches me not, nor flame of that fierce fire
Assails me.'¹

This was her message to Virgil :—

'O courteous shade of Mantua ! thou whose fame
Yet lives, and shall live long as nature lasts !
A friend, not of my fortune, but myself,
On the wide desert in his road has met
Hindrance so great, that he through fear has turn'd.
Now much I dread lest he past help have stray'd,
And I be ris'n too late for his relief,
From what in Heav'n of him I heard. Speed now,
And by thy eloquent persuasive tongue,
And by all means for his deliverance meet,
Assist him. So to me will comfort spring.
I who now bid thee on this errand forth
Am Beatrice.'²

In the first circle of the Inferno Dante meets the greatest poets of the ancient world, and is accepted by them as an equal. He is united with the wise, the learned, and the virtuous, in the Limbo of the

¹ Cary's translation, *Inferno*, Canto ii.

² *Ibid.*

unbaptized. He discourses with Homer, Horace, Ovid, and Lucan, 'on the green enamel of a meadow,' protected by the battlements of a seven-walled, seven-gated stronghold.

'They turn'd to me, with salutation kind
Beck'ning me ; at the which my master smil'd :
Nor was this all ; but greater honour still
They gave me, for they made me of their tribe ;
And I was sixth amid so learn'd a band.'

Dante, a pilgrim in Limbo, moves as friend and comrade, with 'solemn troops and sweet societies.' Far different is the scene in the second circle, where he meets the shades of Paolo and Francesca ; yet to them he accords the comfort of reunion, though as lost wind-beaten spirits.

Dr. Moore remarks that Dante may have felt the tie of personal affection to Francesca, or at least that of friendship and gratitude to her family. 'Besides this too, there would be a strong palliation for her fault to be found in the shameful deception that had been practised upon her, and in her sincere, and from the first, most natural devotion and fidelity to Paolo. Dante might well plead for her in such language as that of Wordsworth :

' "Ah ! judge her gently who so deeply loved."

And so it is permitted to these faithful lovers that even "in death they are not divided." ' ¹

In his wanderings through the Inferno, Dante is often stirred with pity for the 'kindred shades,' some of whom, like his honoured teacher, Brunetto Latini, desire personal talk with him. Farinata rises from his tomb to address a fellow-Tuscan :—

' On his face was mine
Already fix'd : his breast and forehead there
Erecting, seem'd as in high scorn he held
E'en hell.'

Haughtily he demands of the poet :—

' Say, what ancestors were thine ? ' ,

and the feuds of earth are renewed in the land of sorrow.

' I, willing to obey him, straight reveal'd
The whole, nor kept back aught : whence he, his brow
Somewhat uplifting, cried : " Fiercely were they
Adverse to me, my party and the blood
From whence I sprang : twice therefore I abroad
Scattered them." " Though driv'n out, yet they
each time
From all parts," answered I, " returned ; an art
Which yours have shown they are not skill'd to
learn." ' '

¹ *Studies in Dante*, 2nd series, pp. 217, 218.

At these words, another lost soul, Cavalcante, a noble Florentine of the Guelph party, lifts himself from the sepulchre, leaning upon his knees, and asks the piteous question :—

“ If thou through this blind prison go'st
Led by thy lofty genius and profound,
Where is my son ? and wherefore not with thee ? ”

At Dante's use of the past tense in referring to his son Guido, Cavalcante fell ‘supine, nor after forth appear'd he more.’ The pilgrim bids Farinata assure the stricken father that Guido is still among the living. Carlyle says on this famous passage : ‘And how Farinata rises ; and how Cavalcante falls at hearing of his son, and the past tense “*fue*” !’

In the ‘Second Kingdom’ of Purgatory, Dante hears familiar voices from the banks of Arno, and listens to the strains of old remembered music. Very beautiful is the account of his meeting with Casella. Scarcely has the Angel-Pilot landed the boatload of blessed souls who have awaited him at Tiber's mouth, when one of the shades rushes forward towards the poet :—

‘ Then one I saw darting before the rest
With such fond ardour to embrace me, I
To do the like was moved. O shadows vain

Except in outward semblance ! Thrice my hands
I clasped behind it, they as oft returned
Empty into my breast again. Surprise
I needs must think was painted in my looks,
For that the shadow smil'd and backward drew !
To follow it I hasten'd, but with voice
Of sweetness it enjoined me to desist.
Then who it was I knew, and pray'd of it,
To talk with me, it would a little pause.
It answered : " Thee as in my mortal frame
I lov'd, so loosed from it I love thee still,
And therefore pause ; but why walkest thou here ? '

Dante begs his friend to comfort him with song :—

' Then I : " If new laws have not quite destroyed
Memory and use of that sweet song of love,
That whilom all my cares had pow'r to 'suage :
Please thee with it a little to console
My spirit, that incumbered with its frame,
Travelling so far, of pain is overcome."
" Love that discourses in my thoughts," he then
Began in such soft accents, that within
The sweetness thrills me yet.'

Virgil and all who listen are entranced, but Cato
drives the spirits forward towards the Mount of
Purification.

Among the Indolent, Dante meets another
acquaintance, the maker of musical instruments,
Belacqua. He asks why the old man is lingering

on the upward way. Belacqua, who has been taking a siesta with other lazy ones in the shadow of a rock, gives the following answer :—

‘ Brother, what avails it to go up ?
Since the Bird of God who sits up at the gate
To the torments would not let me go.
First must the heaven circle round me
Outside of it, so long as in my life it did.
Because I postponed the good sighs to the end :
Unless ere that prayer gives me help
Which rises from a heart that lives in grace ;
What profits other that in heaven is heard not ? ’

One of the dark thoughts which haunted the imagination of Dante was that of the possible separation of near relatives in the unseen world. There are two well-known examples at the beginning of the *Purgatorio*. Manfred, King of Apulia and Sicily, a man stained on earth with many crimes, appears among the penitents of the last hour. He was excommunicated by the Church, but at the final moment, when mortally wounded in battle, he repented and gave himself to God.

‘ Infinite Goodness hath such ample arms
That it receives whate’er turns back to it.’

Manfred was a natural son of the Emperor Frederick II., whose place is in a fiery tomb in the

Inferno. He lies among the heretics in the City of Dis. Manfred does not name his father to Dante, but claims kinship rather with his grandmother, the Empress Constance, whose home is in the Heaven of the Moon.

We may mention also the case of Buonconte, son of Count Guido of Montefeltro. The Count made his peace with the Church, and on the approach of old age joined the Franciscan Order. St. Francis came to meet him at his death, but a Black Cherub snatched the soul away, with the warning words :—

‘ Who repents not cannot be absolved,
Nor can one repent and will at once,
Because of the contradiction which consents not.’

Guido’s doom is described in Canto xxvii. of the *Inferno*. Buonconte, the son, was struck down in battle. Unlike his father, he repented truly. ‘ One little tear ’ had virtue to save him from the powers of evil.

Ties of home and country link spirits who meet for the first time in the realm of shadows. As an example, take Sordello’s meeting with Virgil at the entrance to the Dell of Princes. The ‘ Lombard spirit ’ stood ‘ in high, abstracted mood,’ moving

with slow dignity his eyes. Virgil asks him to show the best ascent.

‘ It answer to his question none returned,
But of our country and our kind of life
Demanded. When my courteous guide began,
“ Mantua,” the solitary shadow quick
Rose towards us from the place in which it stood
And cried, “ Mantuan ! I am thy countryman
Sordello.” Each the other then embraced.’

‘ Seven times the courteous greetings were exchanged.’

Dante’s friend, Nino Visconti, recognises the poet in the Dell of Princes. He converses with the poet on the second marriage of his wife, Beatrice d’Este, and asks that his nine-year-old daughter, Giovanna, should pray for him. The meeting between the two men is tenderly pictured :—

‘ Only three steps down
Methinks I measured, ere I was beneath,
And noted one who looked as with desire
To know me. Time was now that air grew dim :
Yet not so dim, that ’twixt his eyes and mine
It cleared not up what was concealed before.
Mutually towards each other we advanced.
Nino, thou courteous judge ! what joy I felt,
When I perceived thou wert not with the bad !
No salutation kind on either side
Was left unsaid.’¹

¹ Cary’s translation.

On the terrace of Pride the poet meets the illuminator, Odorisi, who adorned many books for the Pope's library. The artist, though bowed down and twisted beneath the heavy weight which is borne by such penitents, 'saw me, knew me straight, and called.' Dante stoops low and becomes a companion of his way. The art of painting, like that of music, concerns its votaries in the invisible world, and Odorisi talks of pupils and rivals left on earth.

A remarkable case is that of Forese Donati, whom Dante recognises by his voice on the terrace where gluttony is punished by fasting. The faces of the penitents are so macerated by suffering that the wanderer does not know his old companion. Forese was a kinsman of Dante's wife Gemma, and had been dead five years.

'By his looks
I ne'er had recognised him : but the voice
Brought to my knowledge what his cheer concealed.'

Forese turns his eyes in their deep-sunken cells, and fastens them on Dante, who had expected to find him far lower down, among the penitents of the last hour. The spirit explains that it was through the intercessions of his wife, Nella, that

he had come thus far on the purgatorial way. The friends talk long together. Dante asks what has become of Piccarda, Forese's sister, and learns that she already has her place in Paradise. He meets her afterwards in the Heaven of the Moon.

At parting Forese asks : ' When shall I again behold thee ? ' and the poet answers :—

‘ How long my life may last I know not.
This know, how soon soever I return
My wishes will before me have arrived.’

DANTE AND BEATRICE

We come now to Dante's meeting with Beatrice in the Earthly Paradise at the Summit of the Mount of Pain. The wisest interpreters of the *Divina Commedia* are convinced that the lady who met him was a human personality as well as a symbolic figure.

That learned Dantist, Dr. Edward Moore, has unhesitatingly asserted his belief that the Beatrice of the *Divina Commedia* was a real woman, the circumstances and incidents of whose life were substantially such as the poet has recorded in the *Vita Nuova*. She actually lived and moved

‘among the Christians of the thirteenth century.’ Dante’s first meeting with her, when she was eight and he was nine years old, ‘fell like a spark on highly inflammable materials already prepared, and we need not therefore marvel so much “how great a fire a little matter kindled.”’

‘It is surely quite inconceivable,’ says Dr. Moore, ‘if Beatrice were a mere abstraction—an ideal, a symbol, and nothing more—that Dante should have assigned her a definite place in Heaven, and indeed a most exalted place, treating her as a human soul, and associating her with none but absolutely real and historic personages, though many of them are subjected to allegorical treatment in quite as high a degree as herself.’¹

It is a real woman, no theological abstraction, who says to her faithful lover: ‘Look at me well—I, even I, am Beatrice.’

‘Nowhere,’ says Dean Church, ‘has the rapture of long-awaited-for joy been told in such swift and piercing accents as in the story of the moment in which Beatrice reveals her presence:

“Guardami ben—ben son, ben son Beatrice.”’

¹ *Studies in Dante*, 2nd series, p. 141.

These words remain true, even though the first task of Beatrice is that of rebuke and impeachment.

Mr. Gardner says in his book, *Dante's Ten Heavens*: 'When the spiritual guide has done her work . . . allegory practically ceases, and the real woman is enthroned in the glory she has merited.' And again: 'Passages that can only refer to the real woman . . . break in, as it were, in the allegorical narrative, like the wedding music into the story of the Ancient Mariner, giving an air of reality and truth to the whole.'

In the *Convito* Dante thus pictures the reception of holy souls:—

'And as to him who comes from a long journey, before he enters into the gates of his city, the citizens thereof go forth to meet him, so to meet the noble soul go forth those citizens of the eternal Life.'

On the final terrace of Purgatory, amidst the torturing flame, Virgil supported his companion by discoursing of Beatrice: 'Already I seem to see her eyes.' When Beatrice is about to descend into the Chariot of the Church, the elder who represents the writings of Solomon cries three times: '*Veni,*

Sponsa, de Libano—‘Come, O Bride, from Lebanon’—all the others repeating it after him. In the *Vita Nuova* Dante had a vision of his Lady dead, ‘whose head certain ladies seemed to be covering with a white veil.’

‘That dream of death,’ says Dr. Carroll, ‘is here changed into a vision of eternal life. Beatrice is about to return, transfigured and glorified. The white veil is still upon her head, but it is now a bridal veil, and circled round with green olive leaves of the hope and peace and wisdom of eternity. She “descends out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband”; and the Angels that once carried her white soul up with Osannas, now scatter clouds of flowers to welcome her return.’

When the words of welcome are spoken, ‘Blessed art thou that comest,’ and ‘O give lilies with full hands,’ ‘the underlying thought, or rather emotion, is the great mystery of death in which Dante’s spirit had dwelt ever since, nearly ten years before, “the very gentle Beatrice” had passed away, and left the city solitary. . . . If, as Plumptre says, Dante saw “lilies scattered on the grave of Beatrice,” the line must then have sprung instinctively into

his mind, and probably with all the Virgilian melancholy in which it was written. The melancholy is now past. The great Christian doctrine of immortality is revealed. The lilies are scattered with full hands, not now for the death of Beatrice, but for her life, transfigured and glorified. Everything speaks of life; the flowers, the "ministers and messengers of life eternal," the comparison of them to the saints rising from their tombs singing *Alleluia*.' ¹

Dr. Paget Toynbee has pointed out that, although Beatrice is named sixty-three times in the *Divina Commedia*, on no occasion does Dante address her by name. He is addressed by her only once by name; on other occasions she calls him, *frate*, 'brother.'

Dante can see his glorified Lady at first only underneath a veil. His passage from heaven to heaven of Paradise is marked by the increasing beauty of her eyes and smile. He received the answer to his prayer: ² 'May it please Him who is the Lord of courtesy that my soul may go to behold the glory of its lady, that is, that blessed

¹ *Prisoners of Hope*, p. 434.

² *Vita Nuova*.

Beatrice who gloriously gazes on the face of Him Who is blessed throughout all ages. Praise to God.'

REUNION IN PARADISE

On the general subject of reunion in Dante's Paradise, we may quote two passages from Hettinger :

' While the mental joy which the blessed derive from the Beatific Vision is unchangeable, their accidental joy (*Beatitudo accidentalis*) is increased in three ways. First, being all united in the charity of God, they mutually rejoice in each other's joy, and their happiness increases with every one that enters Heaven.'

Hettinger quotes in proof the words :—

' As in a quiet and clear lake the fish
If aught approach them from without, do draw
Towards it, deeming it their food ; so drew
Full more than thousand splendours towards us,
And in each one was heard : " Lo ! one arrived
To multiply our loves ! " And as each came
The shadow, streaming forth effulgence new
Witness'd augmented joy.'¹

¹ Father Bowden's translation of Hettinger's book on the *Divina Commedia*.

Again, Hettinger says :—

‘ As earthly things, by manifesting the Divine power and wisdom, raise our thoughts to God, so the contemplation of the blessed in Heaven is a preparation for the sight of Him in His essence.’

St. Bernard says to Dante (*Par.* xxxi. 88) :

‘ That thou at length mayst happily conclude
Thy voyage (to which end I was despatched,
By supplication mov’d and holy love)
Let thy upsoaring vision range, at large,
This garden through ; for so, by ray divine
Kindled, thy ken a higher flight shall mount.’

If there are few references in the *Paradiso* to the recognition of earthly friends, the explanation is that the souls in the higher heavens appear in the form of stars. The personal self is lost in the divine radiance. In the sphere of Mars, ruled by the Virtues, Dante meets his ancestor Cacciaguida, and hears him discourse on the ruin of Florence. In the Empyrean, Beatrice herself leaves him and yields place to St. Bernard of Clairvaux.

‘ I thought to see Beatrice, and saw an old man
Clad in the vesture of the folk in glory.’

Beatrice has resumed her throne in the Rose of the Blessed, and has sent Bernard, as she once sent

Virgil, to direct her friend. Dante looks upward and beholds his loved one crowned with the eternal rays. He pours out in a final prayer some broken words of gratitude.

‘ And she, so far away
As she appeared, smiled and looked back on me ;
Then unto the Eternal Fountain turned.’

XII

TEACHING OF LUTHER AND MELANCHTHON

IN studying the correspondence of Luther and Melanchthon we observe a marked difference in their attitude towards reunion. Luther's letters of consolation are surprisingly rare, and his language is apt to be stilted and conventional. Only in a few cases does the tenderness of his great heart flow out towards the bereaved. His reticence may be explained by the circumstances of his life. He was brought up in a narrow home, under the harsh rule of parents before whom he trembled like a leaf. A modern biographer suggests that his nervous system was permanently injured by the severity of his treatment at home and at school. Then came long years of monastic and university life, and it was not till the age of forty-two that he experienced the joys of family intercourse. His correspondence is occupied with theological matters,

details of Church government, public affairs in general. We doubt whether more than twenty letters intended simply for condolence have been discovered by his diligent editors. Among these we find a direct reference to reunion in the message sent to Justus Jonas on the death of his wife, a lady much beloved, who passed away in 1542. Luther bids his friend remember that 'although according to the flesh we are divided by a separation very hard to bear, yet one day in the heavenly life we shall see each other, joined together in a blessed union, and gathered unto Him who so loved us that by His own blood and death He prepared that life for His people.'¹

The Reformer knew little of the sharpness of personal bereavement, and he did not allow his thoughts to linger on images of death and sorrow.² His aged father passed away in 1530, when Luther was living in retreat at Coburg. His companion, Veit Dietrich, tells that he took his Psalter and

¹ Enders-Kawerau edition of Luther's Correspondence, vol. xv. (1914), p. 48. This was the last volume published before the war.

² Dr. Kawerau comments on the striking fact that although he wrote to Jonas three days after the date of the letter quoted above, he made no further allusion to the removal of the house-mother, who left behind her a flock of little ones.

retired into his chamber to weep in solitude. On the next day, although suffering from headache, he showed no further trace of mourning. His letters of the time express a true reverence for his father, and a surprising warmth of affection, but the thought uppermost in his mind was that he himself now stood in the front rank of his generation. 'I inherit his name, and am almost the eldest Luther in our family.' He owed much to his father, though he had much to forgive. Within his own household, except for the death of his infant Elizabeth in 1528, he was spared any personal loss until, in September 1542, his favourite child, Magdalena, was taken from him after a short illness. His letters written to various friends after her departure are well known through translations in English biographies. We have not found in any of them an expression of the hope of reunion which he surely cherished. It was Melanchthon who, in notifying the death of Magdalena to the University, included these words, after inviting the students to attend the funeral: 'Her soul has been received into the arms of Christ and awaits the glorious resurrection, in which she will again most sweetly embrace her parents, as it is written,

“It is not the will of your heavenly Father that one of these little ones should perish.”¹

On the last evening of Luther's life, at the supper-table in Eisleben, the conversation turned on recognition in the heavenly state. He joined in the talk, and the following are among his latest recorded words: ‘As Adam, when he awoke from sleep, recognised the newly created Eve at once as flesh of his flesh, through the power of the Spirit of God which enlightened him, even so and far better shall we, who have been renewed in Christ, recognise one another there.’

If the hope of reunion gleams but seldom in the letters of Luther, with Melancthon, especially in his middle and closing years, it was a theme of constant meditation and increasing joy. He looked beyond the narrow life of Wittenberg, with its depressing climate, monotonous scenery, sleepless nights and toilful days, to an early and certain meeting with Old and New Testament heroes, and with loved ones who had gone before. Principal

¹ Enders-Kawerau, vol. xiv. p. 337. Although the notice for the University blackboard bears the name of the Rector, Aurogallus, it is well known that such official writings were usually drawn up by Melancthon, and here his hand is unmistakable.

Lindsay said truly that 'humanism and delicate clinging to the simple faith of childhood blended in the exquisite character of Melanchthon.'¹ He awaited, with childlike faith and hope, his own entrance into the society of prophets and apostles, evangelists and martyrs. Their names recur perpetually in his letters of consolation. The jealousy of colleagues, the suspicions of a dull-witted Elector, family sorrows, the privations of exile, self-reproaches of his sensitive heart, were lost in that light of glory within which he discoursed in anticipation with Abraham and Isaiah, St. Paul and St. John, and drank with them at the full-flowing fountain of eternal wisdom.

Melanchthon is so pre-eminent among modern religious teachers in his grasp of the doctrine of reunion, that we need offer no apology for translating a few relevant passages from the abundant stores of his letters of condolence.

Writing to Osiander on the death of his wife, he bids his friend remember that the lost one had not perished by some chance stroke of fate, but had in the wise purpose of God been called to immortal life. 'She has been taken from us for a little while

¹ *History of the Reformation*, vol. i. p. 156.

in order that ere long God may restore your companionship under far happier conditions. There you will dwell in eternal light, and will talk most lovingly of Him. That future union of pious spouses will far surpass in happiness the sweetest intercourse here on earth.' ¹

The death of a faithful preacher, Nicholas Hausmann, in 1538, brought sorrow to Luther and his circle. Melanchthon wrote on the subject to a mutual friend: 'When I think of the death of Master Nicholas, I feel just as when I am seeing friends away who are about to travel to my homeland. Their departure reawakens my love for my native place, and arouses in me the longing to travel with them to more pleasant scenes. So the death of good and pious men admonishes me of that immortal life which awaits us, and stirs in me the longing to travel with them to that eternal seat and light, in which, without sin, error or darkness, we shall delight in the wisdom of God.' ²

He wrote with tenderest sympathy to the parents of undergraduates who had died of plague

¹ Letter of August, 1537, *Corpus Reformatorum*, vol. iii. col. 406.

² *Corpus Reformatorum*, vol. iii. col. 605.

or other maladies in the unwholesome atmosphere of Wittenberg. A sorrowing father was reminded that 'We are neither born nor called hence by chance, but by the will of God. Jesus tells us that not even a sparrow falls to the ground without our Father. When my son died¹ I found wonderful comfort from these words, which caught my eyes all of a sudden as I was turning over the Psalms : *It is He that hath made us and not we ourselves.* How great, too, is the comfort that you know your boy died so piously that you will embrace each other again in the blessed company of prophets, apostles, and other holy men, where you will talk together of the glory of God, which as a child he heard you celebrate in words of praise.' ■

To another friend he wrote :—

'Do not think you have lost your son. He lives and bids you be at rest about him. He awaits you joyfully in the better life where he will clasp you again in his arms. His presence there will be

¹ His baby George, who died in 1529. The loss of this lovely and promising child was a lifelong sorrow to Melanchthon. It was eleven years later, after an almost fatal illness at Weimar, that he mentioned for the first time the text which had comforted him.

² *Corpus Reformatorum*, vol. iii. col. 1069.

far sweeter to you than when you carried him as a baby in your bosom, and taught him to say his letters ; or when in later years you found pleasure in his talents and diligence. In a little while you will hear him speaking of God, and of all those things which the human mind was formed to understand. You will see him in the company of prophets and apostles, himself discoursing with them.'

In the autumn of 1545 Melanchthon wrote to his bosom friend Camerarius, who had lost a brother by death : ' He lives with the Son of God, among such heroes of the faith as Abraham, Joseph, David, John the Baptist, Paul. Now he sees face to face the judges of our divisions. He rejoices in talking with his beloved parents and with the brother who passed away before him. I hope to come much sooner than you into that assembly. So little do I dread the pilgrimage out of the prison of this earthly life that whenever I think of our University, I am filled with an indescribable yearning for that heavenly school.'

In many other writings he alludes to the 'heavenly academy,' where he hoped to enjoy the society and instruction of patriarchs, prophets, and apostles.

‘That future school rises before my mental vision as often as I enter our schools, and never would I consent to sever my judgment from that of those illustrious teachers.’

In his memorial address on Luther this passage occurs: ‘Let us rejoice that he now holds that familiar intercourse with God and His Son which, by faith in the Son of God, he always sought and expected. There, by the manifestations of God, and by the testimony of the whole Church in heaven, he not only hears the applause of his toils in the service of the Gospel, but is also delivered from the mortal body as from a prison, and has entered that vastly higher school, where he can contemplate the essence of God, the two natures joined in Christ, and the whole purpose set forth in founding and redeeming the Church. . . . We remember the great delight with which he recounted the course, the counsels, the perils and escapes of the Prophets, and the learning with which he discoursed on all the ages of the Church, thereby showing that he was inflamed by no ordinary passion for these wonderful men. Now he embraces them and rejoices to hear them speak and to speak to them in turn. Now they hail him gladly as a companion,

and thank God with him for having gathered and preserved the Church.'

Melanchthon shared the view of Bismarck, that without a firm faith in immortality it would be almost impossible to bear up against the sorrows of the earthly state. In the year 1548, at a time of constant anxiety, he wrote these words: 'If we did not know that this toilful life is a journey towards the sweet society of the heavenly Church, in which God will manifest Himself to us in unveiled beauty, and grant to us an eternal participation in His light, wisdom, righteousness and joy, who could or who would endure the countless pains and conflicts of this life?'

He said to his students about his early tutor, John Unger: 'He was a good man. He loved me as a son, and I him as a father. In a short time we shall meet, I hope, in eternal life.'

Many other passages might be cited, in which the same thoughts recur, but these quotations indicate sufficiently the mind of the great scholar who was honoured in his own day as 'Praeceptor Germaniae.' He was visiting Heidelberg in 1557, when Camerarius brought to him the news of his wife's death at Wittenberg. Melanchthon had been received 'like

a god' by the Protestants assembled at Worms; and at Heidelberg the Elector Palatine and the whole community greeted him with extraordinary demonstrations of affection. His brother George came from Bretten to meet him. Camerarius found his friend so happy that he postponed the mournful announcement till the second day, when the two were walking together in the Prince's garden. Melanchthon received the tidings calmly. Looking towards heaven, he said: 'Fare thee well, I shall soon follow thee.'

His wish was realised less than three years later. In April 1560 he was received into 'the quieter Church.' His son-in-law and devoted physician, Dr. Caspar Peucer, asked him towards the end whether he wanted anything. 'Nothing else but heaven,' he replied, 'so trouble me no further.'

To those who have followed line by line his voluminous correspondence, with its frequent mention of reunion, it is significant that his thoughts at the very end were wholly centred upon God. While the tertian fever was slowly consuming the remnants of his strength, he wrote on the left and right margins of a sheet of paper the reasons why he should not fear death. On the left side were the

words, 'Thou shalt be freed from sin, from cares and from the rage of the theologians.' On the right side, 'Thou shalt come into the light. Thou shalt see God. Thou shalt behold the Son of God. Thou shalt learn those wonderful mysteries which in this life thou couldst not understand, as why we were created as we are, and how the two natures are made one in Christ.'

Keen and ardent as ever in the pursuit of knowledge, Melanchthon passed into the unseen. He had not forgotten his George and his Anna, his dear wife and the young students who had been called from earth before him. But the dying saint was encompassed already by that *lumen gloriæ* in which God alone speaks to the soul and satisfies its desires. St. Bonaventura, writing of the ecstatic union of the soul with God, used words which would have been echoed by this learned Grecian of the Reformation age: 'In the transition, if it is to be perfect, all intellectual activities must be abandoned and the whole apex of affection transferred and transformed into God. But this is a most mystical and most secret thing, which no one knows save him who receives it, no one receives save him who deserves it.'

PART II
TESTIMONIES IN REUNION
EARTHLY RELATIONSHIPS

The great scientist, Michael Faraday, wrote in old age to his niece, Mrs. Deacon:—‘I never heard of the saying that separation is the brother of death ; I think that it does death an injustice, at least in the mind of the Christian ; separation simply implies no reunion ; death has to the Christian everything hoped for, contained in the idea of reunion. I cannot think that death has to the Christian anything that should make it a rare, or other than a constant thought ; out of the view of death comes the view of the life beyond the grave, as out of the view of sin (that true and real view which the Holy Spirit alone can give to a man) comes the glorious hope ; without the conviction of sin there is no ground of hope to the Christian.’

Lord Tennyson tell us that his illustrious father said, shortly before the end, ‘The life after death, Lightfoot and I agreed, is the cardinal point of Christianity. I believe that God reveals Himself in every individual soul : and my idea of heaven is the perpetual ministry of one soul to another.’

‘There is nothing to convince a man of error, nothing in nature, nothing in scripture, if he believe that he shall know those persons in heaven whom he knew (or whom any one else knew) upon earth. If he conceive soberly that it were a less degree of blessedness not to know them than to know them, he is bound to believe that he shall know them, for *he is bound to believe that all that conduces to blessedness shall be given him.*’—

JOHN DONNE.

I

THE FAMILY

‘A man to get into heaven, which is simply a select family, must have the family instinct at heart.’—HENRY DRUMMOND.

Lady Eastlake wrote in her diary on Good Friday, 1892 :—‘ I am happy as to the meeting again. Heaven would be no true home if we did not find those who constitute our true home here : household affections are sacred here, and must be there too.’¹

‘To me God has promised not the heaven of the ascetic temper, or the dogmatic theologian, or of the subtle mystic, or of the stern martyr ready alike to inflict and bear ; but a heaven of purified and permanent affections—of a book of knowledge with eternal leaves, and unbounded capacities to read it—of those we love ever round us, never misconceiving us or being harassed by us—of glorious work to do and adequate faculties to do it.’

W. R. GREG.

IN a time of bereavement, when her own health was rapidly failing, the saintly Quakeress, Elizabeth Fry, was asked by Lady Buxton for her view of the state after death. She answered, ‘ My mind is that there is a tabernacle provided.’ Such has been the hope of our race from the remotest ages

¹ *Letters and Journal of Lady Eastlake*, vol. ii. p. 307.

of its history. The coffin-texts of Egypt prove that the dead expected rehabilitation of their house and home. Above the dead man, as he lay in his coffin, was inscribed a chapter which concerned the building of a house in the Nether World, digging a pool and planting fruit-trees. Another text secured his occupancy, and a third sealed the decree concerning the household, so that the humble citizen should not be without companionship in the world of shadows. An ancient sepulchral record says: 'Geb, hereditary prince of the gods, has decreed that there be given to me my household, my children, my brothers, my father, my mother, my slaves, and all my establishment.'¹

SIR THOMAS BROWNE

Sir Thomas Browne suspects 'a mixture of bones' in funeral urns. 'All urns contained not single ashes; without confused burnings they affectionately compounded their bones; passionately endeavouring to continue their living unions. And when distance of death denied such conjunctions,

¹ Quoted by Professor Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*, p. 280.

unsatisfied affections conceived some satisfaction to be neighbours in the grave, to lie urn by urn, and touch but in their names. And many were so curious to continue their living relations, that they contrived large and family urns, wherein the ashes of their nearest friends and kindred might successively be received, at least some parcels thereof, while their collateral memorials lay in minor vessels about them.'

How different were these faint dreams from the assurance of family reunion which we find in Christian biographies! We take a very few examples from modern writers.

GEORGE HERBERT

George Herbert, as Izaak Walton tells us, comforted himself in his last illness with the thought of reunion. His old friend, Mr. Woodnot, who came from London to Bemerton to visit him on his death-bed, was one of many who heard the poet 'often speak to this purpose': 'My hope is, that I shall shortly leave this valley of tears, and be free from all fevers and pain; and, which will be a more happy condition, I shall be free from sin, and all the temptations and anxieties that

attend it : and this being past, I shall dwell in the New Jerusalem ; dwell there with men made perfect ; dwell where these eyes shall see my Master and Saviour Jesus ; and with them see my dear mother, and all my relations and friends. But I must die, or not come to that happy place. And this is my content, that I am going daily towards it : and that every day which I have lived hath taken a part of my appointed time from me ; and that I shall live the less time for having lived this and the day past.'

SIR WALTER SCOTT

In commenting on *Anne of Geierstein*, Lockhart refers to rare scenes of the novel which offer evidence that they are drawn by a grey-headed man ; and to the author's sympathy with young lovers. The whole of Sir Walter Scott's life, according to his biographer, 'was too present to his wonderful memory to permit of his brooding with exclusive partiality, whether painfully or pleurably, on any one portion or phasis of it ; and besides, he was always living over again in his children, young at heart whenever he looked on them, and the world that was opening on them and their friends. But

above all, he had a firm belief in the future reunion of those whom death had parted.'

DR. NORMAN MACLEOD

'On one of the last days of his life, after the funeral of a favourite nephew, Dr. Norman Macleod talked with more than usual power—almost with excitement—regarding the glorified life of those who had departed in the Lord. He recalled the names and characters of deceased relatives, and described the joy of meeting and recognising them. He spoke of his father, of James, of sisters and uncles who were dead, and of John Mackintosh ('The Earnest Student,' whose biography he had written); and when one of the party chanced to allude to their departure as loss, he vehemently remonstrated against such a view. "Love is possession, love is possession," he repeated.'

DR. JOHN KER

'When that world is all made up, there can, I think, be no manner of doubt,' wrote Dr. John Ker, 'that the ties of this world, purified and ennobled, shall be renewed again. It is strange that it should ever have been a question with

Christians, "Shall we know one another in heaven?" It would not be heaven, that truly human heaven, of which Christ is the centre, if we did not.' ¹

'The farewells we bid now, blessed be the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour, are not eternal farewells,' wrote Dr. Ker in a letter of consolation, 'but partings for a night when we retire to rest, and we shall meet at morning, to know each other and love each other with a knowledge and love of which the best families of earth give us only faint emblems. The members of the family go at different times to rest, sometimes the youngest first: but the Heavenly Father knows the time for us all, and shall bring us together without one wanting at the happy day-dawn. It can be but a brief separation at best, and then all our farewells shall be changed into rapturous welcomes.' ²

DR. JOHN MACLEOD CAMPBELL

Dr. Macleod Campbell wrote to a friend on the death of her granddaughter:—

'We *need* to be comforted with *everlasting* con-

¹ *Letters*, pp. 5, 6.

² *Ibid.*, p. 8.

solation because it is *death* that makes our tears to flow. My little boy said to me lately, when I was reading the twenty-third Psalm to him, "Papa, when other persons die, and then we die, and then we are all dead, then they cannot be taken from us any more." I felt it sweet that the thought of separation was thus obviously painful to him, and that the thought of a condition in which there would be no separation seemed pleasant to him. It was nature that spoke in him. We were intended for dwelling together. Sin has introduced separation; but our hearts are not reconciled to it; and surely it is a part of the goodness of the good news, "the Gospel," in which life and immortality are brought to light, that, while the first fruit of redemption, and the highest, is that we shall glorify God and enjoy Him for ever, this also is its fruit that we shall eternally enjoy each other in Him.'

CHARLES READE

In *The Cloister and the Hearth*, Father Clement (Gerard) says to the Princess: 'Christians live "for ever" and love "for ever," but they do not part "for ever." They part as part the earth and sun,

to meet more brightly in a little while. You and I part here for life ; and what is our life ? Our life in the great story of the Church, whose son and daughter we are ; one handful in the sand of time, one drop in the ocean of “ for ever.” Adieu for the little moment called “ a life.” We part in trouble ; we shall meet in peace. We part creatures of clay ; we shall meet immortal spirits. We part in a world of sin and sorrow ; we shall meet where all is purity and love divine ; where no ill passions are, but Christ is, and His Saints around Him clad in white. There in the turning of an hour-glass, in the breaking of a bubble, in the passing of a cloud, she, and thou, and I shall meet again, and sit at the feet of angels, apostles and saints and arch-angels, and learn like them with joy unspeakable, in the light of the shadow of God upon His throne, for ever and ever and ever.’

DR. MARTINEAU

Dr. Martineau says in his chapter on ‘ The Communion of Saints ’ :—

‘ The Communion of Saints brings to us their conflict first, their blessings afterwards ; those who will not with much patience strive with the evil,

can have no dear fellowship with the good. . . .
We shall leave it to others to take up the supplicating strain ; shall join the emancipated brotherhood of the departed ; and in our turn look down on the outstretched hands of our children, waiting our welcome and embrace. O may the great Father, in His own fit time, unite in one the parted family of Heaven and Earth ! ’

II

PARENTS AND CHILDREN

‘David made his child’s sickness his Lent, but his death his Easter.’—JOHN DONNE.

‘God never takes away any gift which He has once given to His children.’—BISHOP PHILLIPS BROOKS (in a letter to bereaved parents).

WE think first in this chapter of the consolations offered to parents who have lost their infant children.

F. D. MAURICE.

F. D. Maurice wrote to his friend, R. C. Trench, after the birth of a still-born child in his home : ‘Our little infant was a girl, and I believe no one who saw its marble face will think I am wrong in saying that it spoke of life and character. I do not know what the judgment of the Church is, but I could not look upon it without believing that a spirit had been within it, and that it was gone home to its Father’s house, and would one day come again with Christ and His saints.’¹

¹ *Life of F. D. Maurice*, vol. i. p. 265.

DR. CHALMERS

In his lectures on the Romans, Dr. Chalmers wrote :—

‘ Should any parent who hears us feel softened by the touching remembrance of a light that twinkled a few short months under his roof, and at the end of its little period expired—we cannot think that we venture too far when we say that he has only to persevere in the faith and in the following of the gospel, and that very light will again shine upon him in heaven. The blossom which withered here upon its stalk has been transplanted there to a place of endurance, and it will then gladden that eye which now weeps out the agony of an affection that has been sorely wounded ; and in the name of Him, who if on earth would have wept along with them, do we bid all believers present to sorrow not even as others which have no hope, but to take comfort in the thought of that country where there is no sorrow and no separation.

‘ “ Oh, when a mother meets on high
The babe she lost in infancy,
Hath she not then, for pains and fears—
The day of woe, the watchful night—
For all her sorrow, all her tears,
An overpayment of delight ? ” ’

D. L. MOODY

When D. L. Moody lost his infant grandson and namesake, he wrote to the parents: 'I know Dwight is having a good time, and we should rejoice with him. What would the mansions be without children? He was the last to come into our circle, and he is the first to go up there! So safe, so free from all the sorrow that we are passing through! I do thank God for such a life. It was nearly all smiles and sunshine, and what a glorified body he will have, and with what joy he will await your coming! God does not give us such strong love for each other but it is going to last for ever, and you will have the dear little man with you for ages and ages, and love will keep increasing. The Master had need of him, or He would not have called him; and you should feel highly honoured that you had anything in your home that He wanted. . . . I believe the only thing he took away from earth was his sweet smile, and I have no doubt that when he saw the Saviour he smiled as he did when he saw you: and the word that keeps coming to my mind is this: "It is well with the child."'

R. W. EMERSON.

In his dying hours Emerson spoke tenderly to his wife of their life together, and her loving care of him ; they must now part, to meet again and part no more. Then he smiled and said, ' Oh, that beautiful boy ! '

Was he not thinking of a speedy reunion with his son Waldo, known to the world through the exquisite lines of the ' Threnody ' ?

CHARLES DICKENS

In *Little Dorrit* there is a well-known passage on the yearning love of a parent towards a long-lost infant. Mr. Meagles speaks as follows to Arthur Clennam : ' Pet and her baby sister were so exactly alike, and so completely one, that in our thoughts we have never been able to separate them since. It would be of no use to tell us that our dead child was a mere infant. We have changed that child according to the changes in the child spared to us, and always with us. As Pet has grown, that Child has grown ; as Pet has become more sensible and womanly, her sister has become more sensible and womanly, by just the same degrees. It would be as hard to convince me that if I was to pass into

the other world to-morrow, I should not, through the mercy of God, be received there by a daughter, just like Pet, as to persuade me that Pet herself is not a reality at my side.'

ARCHBISHOP BENSON

Bereaved parents have drawn comfort from the thought that the little hands parted from their own would be clasped by kind hands on the other side. Archbishop Benson wrote to a friend who had lost a baby girl called Monica: 'How very strange that Monica should have been baptized on Saint Augustine's day—so utterly unthought of, and unimaginable when her name was chosen. Depend on it the great Monica, the love of whom suggested the name in all ways as much as if she had been a living friend, only with more pity still towards her, will not fail to know the little Monica. These things are not dreams to me, and I know they are not to you. How all earthly relations shift and change in the shadow of eternity—"Commit our dear sister to the ground," for you and for her mother—and to find her an elder sister in Heaven, many years older.' ¹

¹ *Life of Archbishop Benson*, vol. i. p. 405.

R. W. DALE

Dr. Dale, of Birmingham, was thirty-five when he lost his daughter, Alice, a child of six. Three years before his own death, he wrote to a friend who had suffered a similar bereavement: 'I remember very well when my child died, of whom I have spoken; it was many days before I could find any reality in the life to which she had passed. The discovery came curiously. I thought of a friend who had loved her and whom she had loved, who had died a few weeks before, and I said, "She is with Mary Martin." The child was only six, and I could not think of her alone even with God; but when I thought of the saintly woman to whom she had been very dear, her life became very real to me.' ¹

ARCHBISHOP AND MRS. TAIT

In her pathetic description of the last days of the five little daughters lost at Carlisle, Mrs. Tait tells how after the death of Chatty, the first victim of the fever, the eldest of the five, 'Catty,' aged ten, chose a hymn which all sang together, with

¹ *Life of R. W. Dale*, p. 622.

an earnestness of voice and manner which will not soon be forgotten :—

“ Here we suffer grief and pain,
Here we meet to part again,
In heaven we part no more.
Oh, that will be joyful,
Joyful, joyful, joyful !
Oh ! that will be joyful,
When we meet to part no more.”¹

In his diary for Thursday, May 8, 1856, Dean Tait (afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury) wrote :
‘ They are gone from us, all but my beloved Craufurd and the babe. Thou hast reclaimed the lent jewels. Yet, O Lord, how shall I not thank Thee now ? I will thank Thee not only for the children Thou hast left to us, but for those Thou hast reclaimed. I thank Thee for the blessing of the last ten years, and for all the sweet memories of their little lives—memories how fragrant with every blissful, happy thought. I thank Thee for the full assurance that each has gone to the arms of the Good Shepherd, whom each loved according to the capacity of her years. I thank Thee for the bright hopes of a happy reunion, when we shall meet to part no more.

¹ *Catherine and Craufurd Tait*, p. 302.

O Lord, for Jesus Christ's sake comfort our desolate hearts. May we be a united family still in heart through the communion of saints—through Jesus Christ our Lord.' ¹

ALFRED TENNYSON

Enoch Arden, in Tennyson's poem, speaks thus of his departed infant :—

' And now there is but one of all my blood,
Who will embrace me in the world-to-be !
This is his hair ; she cut it off and gave it,
And I have borne it with me all these years,
And thought to bear it with me to my grave :
But now my mind is changed, for I shall see him,
My babe, in bliss ; wherefore when I am gone,
Take, give her this, for it may comfort her ;
It will moreover be a token to her
That I am he.'

ALFRED LYTTTELTON

After the death of his infant son in 1888, Alfred Lyttelton wrote : ' I have been really comforted by the thought of his being with my darling. She once wrote to Edward, that if she died she didn't think her baby could live without her, and in the few moments when I can faithfully realise

¹ *Life of Archbishop Tait*, vol. i. p. 190.

him with her, the thought that he takes with him to her, on his fresh lips and cheeks, my poor kisses, is inexpressibly sweet. Such an unspotted little messenger from me, who feel so coarse and low by their side.'

The birth of this child had cost the life of his young mother.

JEAN INGELOW

'I do not pray, "Comfort me! comfort me!"

For how should comfort be?

O,—O that cooing mouth—that little white head!

No; but I pray, "If it be not too late,

Open to me the gate,

That I may find my babe when I am dead."

Show me the path. I had forgotten Thee

When I was happy and free,

Walking down here in the gladsome light o' the sun;

But now I come and mourn: O set my feet

In the road to thy blest seat,

And for the rest, O God, Thy will be done.'

MRS. BROWNING

Only a Curl

'He's ours and for ever. Believe,

O father!—O mother, look back

To the first love's assurance! To give

Means with God not to tempt or deceive

With a cup thrust in Benjamin's sack.

He gives what He gives. Be content !
He resumes nothing given—be sure !
God lend ?—where the usurers lent
In His temple, indignant He went
And scourged away all those impure.

He lends not, but gives to the end,
As He loves to the end. If it seem
That He draws back a gift, comprehend
'Tis to add to it rather—amend,
And finish it up to your dream,—

Or keep,—as a mother will toys
Too costly, though given by herself,
Till the room should be stiller from noise,
And the children more fit for such joys
Kept over their heads on the shelf.

So look up, friends ! you who, indeed,
Have possessed in your house a sweet piece
Of the Heaven which men strove for, must need
Be more earnest than others are,—speed
Where they loiter, persist where they cease.

You know how one angel smiles there :
Then weep not. 'Tis easy for you
To be drawn by a single gold hair
Of that curl, from earth's storm and despair,
To the safe place above us. Adieu.'

We turn next to passages referring to children
who have passed the age of infancy.

SHAKESPEARE

Constance, in *King John*, rejects the consolation of Philip II. and the Legate Pandulph on the imprisonment of her boy, Arthur. She uses these pathetic words :—

‘ And, father cardinal, I have heard you say
That we shall see and know our friends in heaven :
If that be true, I shall see my boy again ;
For since the birth of Cain, the first male child,
To him that did but yesterday suspire,
There was not such a gracious creature born.
But now will canker-sorrow eat my bud
And chase the native beauty from his cheek
And he will look as hollow as a ghost,
As dim and meagre as an ague’s fit,
And so he ’ll die ; and, rising so again,
When I shall meet him in the court of heaven
I shall not know him : therefore never, never
Must I behold my pretty Arthur more.’

SAMUEL RUTHERFORD

Samuel Rutherford wrote, in 1640, to a friend who had lost a son :—

‘ A going-down star is not annihilated, but shall appear again. If he hath cast his bloom and flower, the bloom is fallen in heaven in Christ’s lap ; and as he was lent a while to Time, so is he

given now to Eternity, which will take yourself; and the difference of your shipping and his to heaven and Christ's shore, the land of life, is only in some few years, which weareth every day shorter, and some short and soon-reckoned summers will give you a meeting with him. But what with him? Nay, with better company:—with the Chief and Leader of the heavenly troops, that are riding on white horses, that are triumphing in glory.'

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Wordsworth wrote to Southey after the death of Southey's son, Herbert, in 1816: 'Whether I look back or forward I sorrow for you, but I doubt not that in time your retrospective thoughts will be converted into sweet though sad pleasures; and, as to your prospective regards in connection with this dear child, as they will never stop short of another and a more stable world, before them your disappointments will melt away, but they will make themselves felt, as they ought to do, since it will be for a salutary purpose. . . . Farewell, and the God of love and mercy sustain you, and your partner.'

When Wordsworth was dying, his wife said

gently to him, 'William, you are going to Dora.'¹ He made no reply at the time, and the words seemed to have passed unheeded; indeed, it was not certain that they had even been heard. More than twenty-four hours afterwards one of his nieces came into the room, and was drawing aside the curtains of his chamber, and then, as if awakening from a quiet sleep, he said, 'Is that Dora?'

ARCHBISHOP BENSON

Archbishop Benson wrote to his wife, a year after the death of his eldest son, Martin, at the age of seventeen: 'How strange and how beautiful it will be to see him again: if we are worthy, to hear from himself that he would rather have passed away from us when he did than have stayed with us. That is hard to realise—and St. Paul even did not know which to choose. May God only keep true in heart and firm in faith our other loves.'²

¹ His daughter, Mrs. Quillinan, who had recently passed away.

² *Life of Archbishop Benson*, vol. i. p. 447. Mr. A. C. Benson tells us that some time after his son's death 'the Bishop showed Canon Mason a card on which Martin had been copying out in mediæval characters the hymn "O quanta qualia," and had laid down his pen at "quos decantabimus"':—

“One and unending is that triumph-song,
Which to the angels and us shall belong.”

Bishop G. H. Wilkinson wrote in 1879 to Dr. Benson, after the death of Martin : ‘ How happy it will be in that strange and invisible Kingdom with your boy, and with my own wife, and the great company, to see what each blow of the hammer has really meant, only may we not be found ἀδοκιμοι (castaways).’

HARRIET BEECHER STOWE

Mrs. Beecher Stowe wrote, after the death of her son Henry :—

‘ I think I have felt the healing touch of Jesus of Nazareth on the deep wound in my heart, for I have golden hours of calm when I say, “ Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in Thy sight.” So sure am I that the most generous love has ordered all, that I can now take pleasure to give this little proof of my unquestioning confidence in resigning one of my dearest comforts to Him. I feel very near the spirit-land, and the words, “ I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me,” are very sweet.’

To her daughter Georgiana, Mrs. Stowe wrote :—

‘ Henry’s fair, sweet face looks down upon me now and then from out a cloud, and I feel again all the bitterness of the eternal “ No,” which says

I must never, never in this life, see that face, lean on that arm, hear that voice. Not that my faith in God in the least fails, and that I do not believe that all this is for good. I do, and, though not happy, I am blessed. Weak, weary as I am, I rest on Jesus in the innermost depth of my soul, and am quite sure that there is coming an inconceivable hour of beauty and glory when I shall regain Jesus, and He will give me back my beloved one, whom He is educating in a far higher sphere than I proposed.'

MRS. BROWNING

In Mrs. Browning's poem, 'Isobel's Child,' the dying child says to the mother :—

' Love ! earth's love ! and *can* we love
Fixedly where all things move ?
Can the sinning love each other ?

Mother, mother,
I tremble in thy close embrace,
I feel thy tears adown my face,
Thy prayers do keep me out of bliss—
O dreary earthly love !

Loose thy prayer and let me go
To the place where loving is.
Yet not sad ; and when is given
Escape to thee from this below,

Thou shalt behold me that I wait
For thee beside the happy gate,
And silence shall be up in heaven
To hear our greeting kiss.'

In 'The Mourning Mother' Mrs. Browning tenderly consoles a mother whose blind boy has died :—

' See how he went out straightway
From the dark world he knew,—
No twilight in the gateway
To mediate 'twixt the two,—
Into the sudden glory,
Out of the dark he trod,
Departing from before thee
At once to light and God !—
For the first face, beholding
The Christ's in its divine ;
For the first place, the golden
And tideless hyaline,
With trees at lasting summer
That rock to songful sound,
While angels the new-comer
Wrap a still smile around.
Oh, in the blessed psalm now,
His happy voice he tries,
Spreading a thicker palm-bough
Than others, o'er his eyes !
Yet still, in all the singing,
Thinks haply of thy song
Which, in his life's first springing,
Sang to him all night long ;

And wishes it beside him,
With kissing lips that cool
And soft did overglide him,
To make the sweetness full.
Look up, O mourning mother !
Thy blind boy walks in light :
Ye wait for one another
Before God's infinite.
But thou art now the darkest,
Thou mother left below—
Thou the sole blind,—thou markest,
Content that it be so,—
Until ye two have meeting
Where Heaven's pearl-gate is,
And *he* shall lead thy feet in,
As once thou leddest *his*.
Wait on, thou mourning mother ! '

In ' A Child's Grave at Florence,' Mrs. Browning
sings :—

' Love, strong as Death, shall conquer Death,
Through struggle made more glorious :
This mother stills her sobbing breath,
Renouncing yet victorious.

Arms, empty of her child, she lifts
With spirit unbereaven—
" God will not all take back His gifts ;
My Lily's mine in heaven.

“ Still mine ! maternal rights serene
Not given to another !
The crystal bars shine faint between
The souls of child and mother.

“ Meanwhile,” the mother cries, “ content !
Our love was well divided :
Its sweetness following where she went,
Its anguish stayed where I did.

“ Well done of God, to halve the lot,
And give her all the sweetness ;
To us the empty room and cot—
To her, the Heaven’s completeness.

“ To us, this grave—to her, the rows
The mystic palm-trees spring in ;
To us the silence in the house—
To her, the choral singing.

“ For her, to gladden in God’s view—
For us to hope and bear on !
Grow, Lily, in thy garden new
Beside the rose of Sharon.

“ Grow fast in heaven, sweet Lily clipped,
In love more calm than this is—
And may the angels dewy-lipped
Remind thee of our kisses !

“ While none shall tell thee of our tears.
These human tears now falling,
Till, after a few patient years,
One home shall take us all in.

“ Child, father, mother—who, left out !
Not mother and not father !—
And when, our dying couch about,
The natural mists shall gather,

“ Some smiling angel close shall stand
In old Correggio’s fashion,
And bear a Lily in his hand,
For death’s annunciation.” ’

MRS. OLIPHANT

Mrs. Oliphant wrote after the death of her last boy, her idolised ‘ Cecco ’ : ‘ I know my Cecco in his heart loved good company and was fain to make friends, but was kept back by the reserve of his nature and a shyness to believe in the interest of others in himself. And the other morning it came into my head that he would now have the noblest of company, and would doubt no more the affection of others, but know as he was known. And this for a little gave me great and sweet consolation, to think of him among some band of the young men like himself whom I have a fond, fantastic thought that our Lord draws to Him, because He too in His flesh was a young man, and still loves His peers in human age, and gathers them about Him, for some great reason of His own. You will feel how fan-

tastic all this is, and yet it gives me more gleams and moments of consolation than anything else.' ¹

Principal Story wrote of his last visit to Mrs. Oliphant: 'Hearing she was very ill, I went down on Sunday week to Wimbledon and found her on her deathbed. Her voice was still strong with its old, familiar tone: her wonderful eyes were as lambent as ever; and her mind was as calm and clear as a summer's sea. "I am dying," she said, "I do not think I can last through the night." Thinking of the "Little Pilgrim" and the "Seen and the Unseen," and the many touching efforts her imagination had made to lift the impenetrable veil, I said, "The world to which you are going is a familiar world to you." "I have no thoughts," she replied, "not even of my boys; but only of my Saviour waiting to receive me, and of the Father."' The names of her sons were among the last on her lips.

G. W. CABLE

The old Colonel in *Belles Demoiselles Plantations*, who had lost his daughters by drowning in the river, dies at the end of the story:—

¹ *Autobiography and Letters of Mrs. Oliphant*, pp. 412, 413.

‘The Colonel whispered once more : “ Mes belles demoiselles !—in paradise—in the garden—I shall be with them at sunrise ” ; and so it was.’

GEORGE MACDONALD

Some of the loveliest passages in verse on the reunion of parents and children are from the pen of George Macdonald.

In the *Diary of an Old Soul* there are these lines on father and daughter :—

‘Again I shall behold thee, daughter true ;
The hour will come when I shall hold thee fast :
In God’s name, loving thee all through and through.
Somewhere in His grand thought this waits for us.
Then shall I see a smile not like thy last—
For that great thing which came when all was past,
Was not a smile, but God’s peace glorious.

Twilight of the transfiguration—joy
Gleam-faced, pure-eyed, strong-willed, light-hearted
boy !
Hardly thy life clear forth of heaven was sent
Ere it broke out into a smile, and went.
So swift thy growth, so true thy goalward bent.
Thou, child and sage inextricably blent,
Must surely one day come to teach thy father in some
heavenly tent.’

Elsewhere the poet writes :—

‘ Death, like high faith, levelling, lifteth all ;
When I awake, my daughter and my son
Grown sister and brother, in my arms shall fall,
Tenfold my boy and girl. Sure every one
Of all the brood to the old wings will run.’¹

We quote also the poem ‘ Greitna, Father ’ :—

‘ Greitna, father, that I ’m gauin,
For fu’ well ye ken the gaet ;
I’ the winter, corn ye ’re sawin’,
I’ the hairst again ye hae’t.

I ’m gauin’ hame to see my mither ;
She ’ll be well acquaint or this !
Sair we ’ll muse at ane anither
’Twixt the auld word an’ new kiss !

Love I ’m doobtin’ may be scanty
Roun’ ye efter I ’m awa’ :
Yon kirkyard has happin plenty
Close aside me, green an’ braw !

An’ abune there ’s room for mony ;
’Twasna made for ane or twa,
But was aye for a’ an’ ony
Countin’ love the best ava.

¹ George Macdonald, *Diary of an Old Soul*.

There nane less ye 'll be my father ;
Auld names we 'll nor tyne nor spare !
A' my sonship I maun gather,
For the Son is King up there.

Greitna, father, that I 'm gauin',
For ye ken fu' well the gaet !
Here, in winter, cast yer sawin',
There, in hairst, again ye hae't.'

III

CHILDREN AND PARENTS

LIFE'S first great sorrow comes to many of us in the last illness and death of a beloved parent. The words of Maurice to A. J. Scott are especially true of such an experience :—

‘ The wonderful blessings of earthly affection can never draw us so closely, become so transfigured into what is higher, never carry with them such a pledge of being eternal, as in sickness. Even where many shadows seem to rest upon the spirit of the sufferer, where what is to you all real appears to him indistinct and visionary, and what you think visionary he still clings to as real, this effect I have found following sickness.’¹

LAMENNAIS'S ‘ HYMN OF THE DEAD ’

We may place here that celebrated prose-poem Lamennais's *Hymn of the Dead*, which was inspired

¹ *Life of F. D. Maurice*, vol. i. p. 378.

by the death of his father and of the uncle who had cared for his youth.

‘ I have just lost my poor uncle,’ he wrote, ‘ who has been to us a second father. The two brothers on the same day married two sisters ; they are together now. So all things pass away, so all things die ! Beati mortui qui in Domino moriuntur ! ’

‘ And thus it happened,’ says a biographer of Lamennais,¹ ‘ that on November 1 of this year 1829, depressed in mind and worn out in body, he had retired to his room, not perhaps without having reminded his young disciples of the sorrowful commemoration ordained by the Church to take place on the following day. The scene has been graphically described by his nephew Blaize :— “ It was in 1829, on the evening of the Feast of All Saints. We were all together in the drawing-room of the old granite house teeming with so many memories. M. Lorin, the maternal ancestor of M. de Lamennais, painted in his judge’s robes, looked down at us gravely and kindly. Madame Lorin, dressed in yellow damask sprinkled with little flowers, and in a velvet cloak trimmed with

¹ *The Abbé de Lamennais*, by the Hon. William Gibson, pp. 114-147.

fur, her hands in her muff, softly smiled at us. But time had passed over these dear faces, and had left but a shade of sadness. My grandfather and my grandmother Lamennais, many of their children and their grandchildren, my great-uncle, Des Saudrais, and his devoted wife, had lived in this house, and had found in it a little rest and happiness. On such a day they, too, had thought of their dead, and hoped for them the joys of heaven. The autumn wind was carrying along in clouds the yellowed leaves from the old oaks which had seen so many generations pass away, and causing to vibrate the rows of slender needled twigs on the branches of the pines, which rose like black phantoms in the darkness. How many loved voices mingling with the rumours of the night cried to us from the grave ‘Remember!’ M. de Lamennais came into the room and read to us his *Hymn of the Dead* :—

“ They also have passed over the earth, they have gone down the river of Time ; their voices were heard for a moment on the banks, and then they were heard no more. Where are they ? Who can tell us ? Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.

“ “ While they passed, thousands of shadowy phantoms beset them ; the world which Christ had cursed showed them its wealth, its pleasures, its power ; they saw it, and suddenly they saw only eternity. Where are they ? Who can tell us ? Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.

“ “ As a ray from on high, appeared a cross far off to guide them on their way, but all did not turn to it. Where are they ? Who can tell us ? Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.

“ “ There were some who said : What are these floods which hurry us along ? Is there anything after this rapid journey ? We do not know. No man knows. And as they spoke the banks disappeared. Where are they ? Who can tell us ? Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.

“ “ There were some who seemed, wrapped in thought, to listen to a sweet word, and then looking towards the west all at once they began to sing of an invisible dawn, and of a day which never ends. Where are they ? Who can tell us ? Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.

“ “ Drawn along pell-mell, young and old, all disappeared even as a vessel driven before a storm. It would be easier to count the sand of the sea than

the number of those who were hurrying by. Where are they? Who can tell us? Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.

“Those who saw them have said that a great sadness was in their hearts; agony stirred their breasts, and as if tired of the work of life, raising their eyes to heaven, they wept. Where are they? Who can tell us? Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.

“From the unknown places where the river is lost, two voices are continually rising. One says: ‘Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord; Lord, hear my voice; let Thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications. If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with Thee and plenteous redemption.’

“And the other: ‘We praise Thee, O God! We bless Thee. Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God of Hosts. Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.’

“And we also shall go thither whence come these cries of sorrow or songs of triumph. Where shall we be? Who can tell us? Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.”

FRÉDÉRIC OZANAM

The French saint and scholar, Frédéric Ozanam, who was called from his labours in mid-life after a long illness, had a profound belief in the reunion of families in the heavenly state. His father, a 'beloved physician,' died in 1836, as the result of a fall on the staircase of a house where he was visiting one of his many poor patients. Frédéric Ozanam, writing to his early friend Curnier, said that he drew comfort in his bereavement from the thought of his father's piety, and from this other thought 'that soon, if we are good, we shall join him again in the eternal meeting-place, where death will be no more. As the number increases in the unseen world of the dear souls who have left us, the more powerful becomes the attraction which draws us thither. We cling less firmly to earth when the roots by which we are bound to it have been broken by Time.' ¹

Two years after the death of his mother, Ozanam wrote to his friend, Falconnet, a beautiful letter of consolation on a similar bereavement. He told

¹ *Frédéric Ozanam d'après sa Correspondance*, par Mgr. Baunard (1912), p. 192.

how he felt the presence of his mother still about him, and that he believed she was still caring for him in heaven. 'Have mothers here on earth any other glory than their children, any other happiness than ours? And what is heaven for them, if we are absent? I am very sure, therefore, that we fill their thoughts, that they live for us, there as here. I believe they have not changed, except for greater power and a larger love.' ¹

JOHN FOSTER

When John Foster learned in 1799 that his aged parents had removed to a new home, he wrote to them as follows:—

'To the immortal spirit every house, and the world itself, is but a prison; you carry into your new abode the pleasing certainty that *no* sublunary abode will detain you so long as the one which you have quitted. How much you will know before many more years shall have passed! Long before that time you will have seen the visions of éternity; you will have entered the *alone* happy mansions; you will have joined the great company which no

¹ *Frédéric Ozanam d'après sa Correspondance*, par Mgr. Baunard (1912), p. 228.

man can number. Yes, and at an earlier period or a later, I hope I shall meet you there, after having overcome through the blood of the Lamb. Go before, if it must be so, and enter first into the Paradise of God. I trust that the path of faith and zeal will conduct me to the same happy place, and that He who has the keys of the invisible world will give me admittance there.'

THOMAS CARLYLE

Carlyle wrote of his father :—

' Let me learn of *him*. Let me write my books as he built his houses, and walk as blamelessly through this shadow world ; if God so will, to rejoin him at last.'

And again :—

' Perhaps my father, all that essentially was my father, is even now near me, with me. Both he and I are with God. Perhaps, if it so please God, we shall in some higher state of being meet one another, recognise one another.'

Carlyle wrote to his brother Alick in 1847 :—

' Early next week, probably on Monday . . . I expect to be in poor old Annandale again, and to see

our dear old Mother once more. It is a sight for which one ought to thank Heaven, surely with one's whole soul : and yet to me it is always full of sorrow : and when the time comes to part again, it quite tears me to pieces for the moment, so that I could almost repent ever having come. O surely there is some kind of reunion appointed for poor wretches who have honestly loved one another here, and yet could never much help one another, but had to admit many times that their hearts were sore, and could only share their sorrows together ! God made us all ; God will provide what is *good* for us all, what is best for us all.' ¹

' To all of us,' wrote Carlyle to Ruskin, ' the loss of our mother is a new epoch in our life-pilgrimage, now fallen lonelier and sterner than it ever seemed before.'

He wrote to his mother in her old age :—

' Often, my dear mother, does it come across me, like the cold shadow of death, that we two must part in the course of time. I shudder at the thought, and find no refuge, except in humbly trusting that the great God will surely appoint us

¹ *New Letters*, vol. ii. pp. 47, 48.

a meeting in that far country to which we are tending. May He bless you for ever, my dear mother, and keep up in your heart the sublime hopes which at present serve as a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, to guide our footsteps through the wilderness of life. We are in His hands. He will not utterly forsake us. Let us trust in Him.'

After his mother's death in 1854, he wrote :—

' I often think it is with me as with Ulysses (in old Homer) : At the utmost and worst passage of his wanderings he converses with the shade of his mother.' ¹

JOHN RUSKIN

In March 1881 Ruskin wrote to Dr. John Brown :

' Both these illnesses have been part of one and the same constant thought, far out of sight of the people about me, and of course getting more and more separated from me as they go on in the ways of the modern world, and *I go back* to live with my father and my mother and my nurse, and one more—all waiting for me in the Land of the Leal.' ²

¹ *New Letters*, vol. ii. p. 164.

² *Life of Ruskin*, vol. ii. p. 454.

MRS. BROWNING ON HER MOTHER-IN-LAW

Robert Browning's mother died in March 1849, soon after the birth of his son in Italy. Mrs. Browning wrote to her sister-in-law in May :—

‘ I understand what I have lost. I know the worth of a tenderness such as you speak of, and I feel that for the sake of my love for Robert she was ready out of the fulness of her heart to love me also. It has been bitter to me that I have unconsciously deprived him of the personal face-to-face shining out of her angelic nature for more than two years, but she has forgiven me, and we shall meet when it pleases God, before His throne.’

PHILLIPS BROOKS

Bishop Phillips Brooks, who belonged to a far-descended New England family, wrote to his widowed mother at the death of his father :—

‘ When we remember his weakness and restlessness a week ago, and then think of the perfect peace and joy and knowledge that he is enjoying now, it is not so hard to bear it all and even to be thankful. It was a noble, faithful, useful life here, and now he is with Christ. It will not be long before

we are with him. Let us try to be brave and wait as he would want us to do.' ¹

BISHOP WILKINSON

Bishop G. H. Wilkinson wrote after the sudden death of his father :—

'Often I cannot believe it. I fancy that he is coming over, and catch myself saying to myself that I will ask his advice about this or that alteration, and then I remember that all our talks—so free, so happy, so like the talks of real friends as well as of father and son—all are over for this world. Hereafter it may be there will be happier talks, things made clear which now are dark, difficulties which beset our path here for ever removed. Then I am convinced we shall see that our Heavenly Father has done all in perfect love, as well as perfect wisdom. What we do not know now we *shall* know hereafter—of this I feel more and more certain every day.' ²

CARDINAL NEWMAN

J. H. Newman wrote after the death of his mother in 1836 :—

¹ *Life of Phillips Brooks*, vol. ii. p. 166.

² *Life of Bishop Wilkinson*, vol. i. p. 158.

‘ I am learning more than hitherto to live in the presence of the dead—this is a gain which strange faces cannot take away.’¹

DR. JOHN BROWN

Dr. John Brown, author of *Rab and His Friends*, says in one of his letters :—

‘ My love for my mother has been stirring unsatisfied in me for twenty-eight years, and will, I am sure, never cease demanding its own till I meet her again. I can remember standing at her grave, and wondering what sort of odd trick this was that so many grave men were playing, until they began pulling from me the little cord I had in my hand holding the coffin, and then I felt something of the reality of my terrible loss, never to see her again and her mild unchangeable eyes, and never to be near her and sleep in her bosom.’

DR. STOPFORD BROOKE

Dr. Stopford Brooke wrote in his diary, on hearing of the departure of his venerable mother, Mrs. Richard Brooke :—

¹ *Letters and Correspondence of J. H. Newman*, edited by Anne Mozley, vol. i. p. 176.

‘ I can see her now, and a fair vision she is. I wonder if she is now talking with my Father, and does he know—and did he meet her immediately ? Oh, what a tribe of questions surge up like ghosts on a resurrection day ! Not a word, not a word, not a breath, not one intimation from that world, near as the very heart, but far as the remotest space to thought.’

To his sister, Honor, he wrote :

‘ I wonder if my Father welcomed her, or did it seem otherwise to the great Lover ? He must have been watching, and they will have another honeymoon. I think what will astonish us most when we get into the life to come will be the host of friends whom we shall meet, many whom we have never known on earth, a thousand, thousand welcomes. There is nothing greater than the *Heimlichkeit* of Heaven. We shall be intimately at home.’¹

HARRIET BEECHER STOWE

Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote of her saintly mother, Roxana Foote, wife of Dr. Beecher :—

‘ There was one passage of Scripture always

¹ *Life and Letters of Stopford Brooke*, by L. P. Jacks, vol. ii. pp. 486, 487.

associated with her in our minds in childhood ; it was this : “ Ye are come unto Mount Zion, the city of the living God, to the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels ; to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.”

‘ We all knew that this was what our father repeated to her when she was dying, and we often repeated it to each other. It was to that we felt we *must* attain, though we scarcely knew how. I think it will be the testimony of all her sons that her image stood between them and the temptations of youth as a sacred shield ; that the hope of meeting her in heaven has sometimes been the last strand which did not part in hours of fierce temptation.’ ¹

JULIANA HORATIA EWING

Mrs. Ewing wrote after the death of her mother, Mrs. Gatty :—

‘ It is all over. She *is* with your father and mother, and the dear Bishop, and my two brothers, and many an old friend who has “ gone before.”

¹ *Life and Letters of Harriet Beecher Stowe*, by Annie Fields, pp. 13, 14.

The sense of her higher state is so overwhelming, one *cannot* indulge a *common* sorrow. For myself I can only say that I feel as if I were a child again in respect of her. She is as much with *me* now as with any of her children, even if I am in Jamaica or Ceylon. *Now* she knows and sees my life, and I have a feeling as if she were an ever-present *conscience* to me (as a mother's presence makes a child alive to what is right and what is wrong), which I hope by God's grace may never leave me and may make me more worthy of having had such a mother.' ¹

FATHER BENSON

Father Benson of Cowley wrote to a lady on the death of her mother :—

‘Your mother’s death must necessarily sever many links. The earthly tie is gone, but in the scattering of a family one realises increasingly the heavenly bond of unity which death cannot break. The next world was the ghost-world. As time goes on the ghost-world becomes the reality and the material world a phantasmagoria.’ ²

¹ *Juliana Horatia Ewing and her Books*, by Horatia K. F. Eden, p. 192.

² *Letters of Richard Meux Benson*, p. 301.

THE HON. ADELAIDE DRUMMOND

Mrs. Drummond wrote in her sixty-ninth year to her aged stepmother, Lady Russell :—

‘ Sometimes a quite unexpected thought cheers one in regard to death. I find great sweetness in the calm way some of the Old Testament saints, Jacob, for instance, prepared for and met the change. That expression “Thou shalt be gathered to thy fathers” soothes me very much. The idea of being “gathered” suggests care and thought in the gatherer, care that we shall not be lost, but carefully conveyed and treasured up. And “to thy fathers” seems to suggest that we shall be with, not necessarily our ancestors, but those with whom we have been *en rapport*, those who care for us as we have cared for them. I had a very happy sleepless hour when that thought came to me.’ ¹

D. M. DOLBEN

From his poem ‘The Shrine.’

‘ There is a shrine whose golden gate
Was opened by the Hand of God ;
It stands serene, inviolate,
Though millions have its pavement trod ;

¹ *The Hon. Adelaide Drummond: Retrospect and Memoir*, by Basil Champneys, p. 14.

As fresh as when the first sunrise
Awoke the lark in Paradise.

'Tis compassed with the dust and toil
Of common days, yet should there fall
A single speck, a single soil
Upon the whiteness of its wall,
The angels' tears in tender rain
Would make the temple theirs again.

Without, the world is tired and old,
But, once within the enchanted door,
The mists of time are backward rolled,
And creeds and ages are no more ;
But all the human-hearted meet
In one communion vast and sweet.

I enter—all is simply fair,
Nor incense-clouds, nor carven throne ;
But in the fragrant morning air
A gentle lady sits alone ;
My mother—ah ! whom should I see
Within, save ever only thee ? '

WILLIAM COWPER

From the ' Lines to his Mother's Picture.'

' Where thou art gone
Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown.
May I but meet thee on that peaceful shore,
The parting word shall pass my lips no more ! '

IV

BROTHERS AND SISTERS

‘ If we do not know ourselves we most certainly do not know our brethren : that revelation awaits us, it may be, first in Heaven.’—MICHAEL FAIRLESS.

CARLYLE

CARLYLE wrote to Emerson after the death of Charles Chauncy Emerson, in 1836 :—

‘ What a bereavement, my friend, is this that has overtaken you ! Such a brother, with such a life opening around him, like a blooming garden where he was to labour and gather, all vanished suddenly like frostwork, and hidden from your eye ! It is a loss, a sore loss, which God had appointed you. . . . Many times in the crowded din of the Living, some sight, some feature of a face, will recall to you the Loved Face ; and in these turmoiling streets you see the little silent churchyard, the green grave that lies there so silent—inexpressibly wae. O, perhaps we *shall* all meet yonder, and the tears be wiped

from all eyes ! One thing is no perhaps : surely we *shall* all meet if it be the will of the Maker of us. If it is not His will, then is it not better so ? Silence since in these days we have no speech ! Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, in any day.' ¹

R. W. DALE

Dr. R. W. Dale clung with close affection to his younger brother, Thomas, a gifted and accomplished man. Thomas Dale had been third Wrangler in the Mathematical Tripos in 1862, was elected to a Trinity Fellowship, and settled at Cambridge, where he won a considerable reputation as a college lecturer and 'coach.' His death, in 1883, was a lasting sorrow to Dr. Dale. The bereaved brother wrote to Dr. Crosskey : 'One side of life has become quite dark to me. My other brothers died in childhood before he was born. I never had a sister. God has given me much love of other kinds—but the heart aches for what is lost and can never come back. We shall be restored to each other, but under other conditions ; the old affection will be transfigured, but

¹ *Correspondence of Carlyle and Emerson*, vol. i. pp. 101, 102.

it will not be the same. We cling to the life that now is as well as to the life that is to come.'

Dr. Dale's son and biographer says that the stanzas in Keble's poem for St. Andrew's Day, 'When brothers part for manhood's race,' were among Dale's favourite passages. The last stanza—quoted in an address on Friendship, only a few weeks before his death—had come to have a personal note for him :—

“That so, before the judgment-seat,
Though changed and glorified each face,
Not unremembered ye may meet,
For endless ages to embrace.”¹

NORMAN MACLEOD

In December, 1833, Norman Macleod lost his brother James, his junior by three years and a lad of high promise. The event is described as a turning point in Norman's life, and the anniversary of his brother's death was always kept sacred by him. In his Journal he wrote of their last meeting :—

'Monday, 16th Dec.—Alas, this day I parted from one whom I loved as devotedly as a brother can be loved ! Thank God and Christ we shall

¹ *Life of Dr. Dale*, p. 515.

meet ! I went to his bedside : “ I am going away, James, my boy ; but I part without sorrow, for I know you are Christ’s and Christ is God’s.” “ I have, Norman, got clearer views since we met. I know on whom I can lean.” ’ ¹

CARDINAL NEWMAN

Cardinal Newman’s biographer tells us that the death of his sister Mary, in January 1828, made an epoch in his life, and greatly developed his religious nature. To this sister he had been devoted :—

‘ She had been in delicate health. But her death was at the last sudden. His letters show how her memory haunts him. He bids the family set down in writing all they can remember about her. “ It draws tears to my eyes,” he writes, “ to think that all of a sudden we can only converse about her as about some inanimate object, word or stone. But she shall “flourish from the tomb.” And in the meantime, it being but a little time, I would try to talk to her in imagination and in hope of the future by setting down all I can think of about her.” ’ ²

¹ *Life of Norman Macleod*, 2nd edition, 1877, p. 32.

² *Life of Cardinal Newman*, by Wilfrid Ward, vol. i. p. 41.

DR. JOHN KER

Dr. John Ker wrote to one who had lost a brother :—

‘ I think, next to the desire for God Himself—for an Infinite Friend, it is the desire for our dead that presses us to the cry, “ My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God,” the living God who will not let the dearest and deepest things to which He has given life die for ever, and who has sent His Son into the world to lie down in our grave and rise again, that He may be the first fruits of them that sleep. If we can clasp Him to our heart, it recovers all and more—the shadow of death is turned into the morning, and the dim, fading past changes into a blessed future. We may even say it makes them present. “ Ye shall see greater things than these,” heaven opens, and the angels of God ascend and descend on Him. May you and yours, my dear friend, have something of this view, and as your faith lifts its eye by that heavenly ladder, may the departed come down and be about you in your thoughts and feelings, may we not hope with a true though unseen presence ? . . . ’¹

¹ *Letters*, p. 336.

STOPFORD BROOKE

Stopford Brooke wrote after the death of his brother, William :—

‘ I suppose I am, in getting old, less liable to think of loss and more of gain when I consider the dead I have loved. I do not love them less, but even more, but I am no longer troubled about their life. They are with the highest Love ; and William was so good, true and loving, that he will be crowded with enjoyment. And I know he was looking forward to meeting my father and mother. It is a vast blessing in these hours to be at rest about those who are gone from us and alive in God.’ ¹

JAMES SHIRLEY’S ITALIAN TRAGEDY ‘ THE
TRAITOR ’

ACT V. SCENE 3.

Florio laments on the dead body of his sister, in her bed :—

‘ Let me look upon
My sister now ; still she retains her beauty,
Death has been kind to leave her all this sweetness.

¹ *Life and Letters of Stopford Brooke*, by L. P. Jacks, vol. ii. p. 488.

Thus in a morning have I oft saluted
My sister in her chamber, sate upon
Her bed, and talked of many harmless passages ;
But now 'tis night, and a long night with her,
I ne'er shall see these curtains¹ drawn again,
Until we meet in heaven.'

¹ *i.e.*, her eyelids.

V

LOVERS

‘ Will Ianthe wake again,
And give that faithful bosom joy
Whose sleepless spirit waits to catch
Light, life and rapture from her smile ? ’

SHELLEY.

‘ Could ye “ We loved her once ”
Say cold of me when further put away
In earth’s sepulchral clay,
When mute the lips which deprecate to-day ?
Not so ! not then—least then ! When life is shriven
And death’s full joy is given—
Of those who sit and love you up in heaven
Say not “ We loved them once.” ’

Say never ye loved once :
God is too near above, the grave beneath,
And all our moments breathe
Too quick in mysteries of life and death
For such a word. The eternities avenge
Affections light of range.
There comes no change to justify that change,
Whatever comes—Loved Once ! ’

E. B. BROWNING.

JOHN RUSKIN

RUSKIN wrote to a friend a year after the death
of his lady, Rose La Touche :—

‘There is one thing I am sure both Rose and Beatrice would say—and Dante, now he is with them—that in this day of the dark world, no one who loves truly should think of being happy here : that we are called upon to labour and to wait—being sure of joy, such as we know not and need not know, till it is revealed to us by the Spirit.’

In the same letter Ruskin mentions that he has been reading with extreme care the two sonnets of Guido Guinicelli, one of which his biographer quotes as follows :—

“ Comfort thee, comfort thee,” exclaimeth Love ;
And Pity by thy God adjures thee “ rest ” ;
Oh then incline ye to such gentle prayer ;
Not Reason’s plea should ineffectual prove,
Who bids ye lay aside this dismal vest,
For man meets death through sadness and despair.
Amongst you ye have seen a face so fair :
Be this in mortal mourning some relief.
And for more balm of grief,
Rescue thy spirit from its weary load,
Remembering thy God ;
And that in heaven thou hopest again to share
In sight of her, and with thine arms to fold :
Hope then : nor of this comfort quit thy hold.’¹

¹ *Life of Ruskin*, by E. T. Cook, vol. ii. p. 276.

JACOPO DA LENTINO

The early Italian poet, Jacopo da Lentino, wrote a sonnet on his Lady in Heaven, which is thus translated by Rossetti :—

‘ I have it in my heart to serve God so
That into Paradise I shall repair—
The holy place through the which everywhere
I have heard say that joy and solace flow.
Without my lady I were loth to go,—
She who has the bright face and the bright hair ;
Because if she were absent, I being there,
My pleasure would be less than naught, I know.
Look you, I say not this to such intent
As that I there would deal in any sin :
I only would behold her gracious mien,
And beautiful soft eyes, and lovely face,
That so it should be my complete content
To see my lady joyful in her place.’ ¹

E. B. BROWNING

‘ How do I love thee ? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach when feeling out of sight
For the ends of Being and ideal grace.
I love thee to the level of everyday’s
Most quiet need, by sun and candlelight.
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right ;
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.

¹ *Early Italian Poets*, translated by D. G. Rossetti (Temple Classics), p. 33.

I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints,—I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life !—and, if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death.'

'Sonnets from the Portuguese.'

MRS. BROWNING

(From a letter of 1849.)

'To live rightly we must turn our faces forward
and not look backward morbidly for the footsteps
in the dust of those beloved ones who travelled
with us but yesterday. They themselves are not
behind but before, and we carry with us our
tenderness living and undiminished towards them,
to be completed when the round of this life is com-
plete for us also.'

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

'O my love, my dove, lift up your eyes
Toward the eastern gate like an opening rose.
You and I who parted will meet in Paradise
Pass within and sing when the gates unclose.

This life is but the passage of a day,
This life is but a pang and all is over,
But in the life to come which fades not away
Every love shall abide and every lover.'

‘ A dimness of a glory glimmers here
Thro’ veils and distance from the space remote,
A faintest far vibration of a note
Reaches to us and seems to bring us near ;
Causing our face to glow with braver cheer,
Making the serried mist to stand afloat,
Subduing languor with an antidote,
And strengthening love almost to cast out fear :
Till for one moment golden city walls
Rise looming on us, golden walls of home,
Light of our eyes until the darkness falls ;
Then through the outer darkness burdensome
I hear again the tender voice that calls,
“ Follow me hither, follow, rise and come.” ’

‘ If now you saw me you would say :
Where is the face I used to love ?
And I would answer : Gone before ;
It tarries veiled in Paradise.
When once the morning star shall rise,
When earth with shadow flees away
And we stand safe within the door,
Then you shall lift the veil thereof.
Look up, rise up ; for far above
Our palms are grown, our place is set ;
There we shall meet as once we met,
And love with old familiar love.’

CHARLOTTE BRONTË

Caroline Helstone says, as she watches Robert Moore walking in the moonlight with Shirley :

‘ They look to me like two great happy spirits :
yonder silvered pavement reminds me of that
white shore we believe to be beyond the death-
flood : they have reached it, they walk there
united.’ ¹

D. G. ROSSETTI

These lines are from Rossetti’s *Blessed Damozel* :

‘ “ I wish that he were come to me,
For he will come,” she said.
“ Have I not prayed in Heaven ?—on earth,
Lord, Lord, has he not prayed ?
Are not two prayers a perfect strength ?
And shall I feel afraid ?

When round his head the aureole clings,
And he is clothed in white,
I’ll take his hand and go with him
To the deep wells of light ;
As unto a stream we will step down
And bathe there in God’s sight.

We two will stand beside the shrine,
Occult, withheld, untrod,
Whose lamps are stirred continually
With prayer sent up to God ;
And see our old prayers, granted, melt
Each like a little cloud.

¹ *Shirley*, chapter xiii.

We two will lie i' the shadow of
 That living mystic tree
 Within whose secret growth the Dove
 Is sometimes felt to be,
 While every leaf that His plumes touch
 Saith His Name audibly.

And I myself will teach to him,
 I myself, lying so,
 The songs I sing here ; which his voice
 Shall pause in, hushed and slow,
 And find some knowledge at each pause,
 Or some new thing to know.

There will I ask of Christ the Lord
 Thus much for him and me :—
 Only to live as once on earth
 With Love—only to be,
 As then awhile, for ever now
 Together, I and he."

She gazed and listened and then said,
 Less sad of speech than mild,—
 "All this is when he comes." She ceased,
 The light thrilled towards her, filled
 With angels in strong level flight.
 Her eyes prayed, and she smiled."

ROBERT BROWNING

Browning's poem 'The Last Ride Together' closes with this verse :—

'And yet—she has not spoke so long !
 What if heaven be that, fair and strong

At life's best, with our eyes upturned
Whither life's flower is first discerned,
We, fixed so, ever should so abide ?
What if we still ride on, we two
With life for ever old yet new,
Changed not in kind but in degree,
The instant made eternity,—
And heaven just prove that I and she
Ride, ride together, for ever ride ? ’

There is the desire for larger achievement
beyond the grave. In ‘ One Word More ’ Browning
says :—

‘ I shall never, in the years remaining,
Paint you pictures, no, nor carve you statues,
Make you music that should all-express me ;
So it seems : I stand on my attainment.
This of verse alone, one life allows me ;
Verse and nothing else have I to give you.
Other heights in other lives, God willing :
All the gifts from all the heights, your own, Love ! ’

THOMAS NOON TALFOURD

From ‘ ION.’ Act v. Scene 2

Clemanthe asks Ion, on verge of his death :—

‘ And shall we never see each other ? ’

Ion replies, after a pause :

‘ Yes !

I have ask’d that dreadful question of the hills

That look eternal ; of the flowing streams
 That lucid flow for ever ; of the stars,
 Amid whose fields of azure my raised spirit
 Hath trod in glory : all were dumb, but now
 While I thus gaze upon thy living face,
 I feel the love that kindles through its beauty
 Can never wholly perish ; we *shall* meet
 Again, Clemanthe ! ’

PHILIP BOURKE MARSTON

From his poem ‘ In Grief ’ :—

‘ O strange and unseen land whereto we come,
 Are thy shores shores of day, or shores of night ?
 As we draw near shall we indeed see light,
 And shall we hear, through lessening wind and foam,
 The voice of her we love sound from the land,
 And, looking shorewards, shall we see her stand
 Girt round with glory on a peaceful strand
 Smiling to see our dark skiff heave in sight ?

I cannot know ; there is no man who knows.
 We are, and we are not,—and that is all
 The knowledge which to any may befall ;
 We know not life’s beginning, nor life’s close,—
 ’Twixt dawn and twilight shine the sunny hours
 Wherein some hands pluck thorns and some hands
 flowers ;
 ’Twixt light and shade are shed the sudden showers ;
 Yet night shall cover earth as with a pall.

.

Alas, poor song, all singing is in vain ;
What thing more sad is left for thee to say ?
Oh, weary time of life, and weary way,
Can dead souls rise, or lost joys live again ?
Now by the hand of sorrow are we led ;
Though sweet things come, they come as joys born
 dead :
Let us arise, go hence, for all is said,
And we must bide the breaking of the day.'

VI

HUSBAND AND WIFE

‘Till God’s love set thee at his side again.’

TENNYSON TO QUEEN VICTORIA.

The following ‘Epitaph upon a Young Married Couple Dead and Buryed together’ is from the pen of the great Caroline poet, Richard Crashaw :—

‘To these, whom Death again did wed,
This grave’s their second Marriage-bed ;
For though the hand of fate could force
’Twixt Soul and Body a divorce,
It could not sunder man and wife,
’Cause they both livèd but one life.
Peace, good Reader. Doe not weep.
Peace, the Lovers are asleep.
They, sweet Turtles, folded ly
In the last knott love could ty.
And though they ly as they were dead
Their pillow stone their sheetes of lead,
(Pillow hard, and sheetes not warm)
Love made the bed ; They’ll take no harm.
Let them sleep : let them sleep on
Till this stormy night be gone,
Till the Eternall morrow dawn ;
Then the curtains will be drawn
And they will wake into a light
Whose day shall never dy in Night.

In Madame D'Arblay's *Diary and Letters* she describes the death of her husband :—

‘ He bent forward, as he was supported nearly upright by pillows in his bed, and taking my hand, and holding it between both his own, he impressively said, “ Je ne sais si ce sera le dernier mot—mais ce sera la dernière pensée—notre réunion ! ” Oh, words the most precious that ever the tenderest of husbands left for balm to the lacerated heart of a surviving wife ! ’

ST. AUGUSTINE

ST. AUGUSTINE thus describes the last illness of his mother, Monica :—

‘ She fell sick of a fever ; and in the sickness one day she fell into a swoon, and was for a while withdrawn from these visible things. We hastened round her, but she was soon brought back to her senses ; and, looking on me and my brother standing by her, said to us inquiringly, “ Where was I ? ” And then looking fixedly on us, with grief amazed ; “ Here,” saith she, “ shall you bury your mother.” I held my peace and refrained weeping ; but my brother spake something, wishing for her, as the happier lot, that she might die, not in a strange place, but in her own land. Whereat, she with anxious look, checking him with her eyes, for that he still *savoured such things*, and then looking upon

me; "Behold," saith she, "what he saith": and soon after to us both, "Lay," she saith, "this body anywhere; let not the care for that any way disquiet you: this only I request, that you would remember me at the Lord's altar, wherever you be."

'But I, considering thy gifts, Thou unseen God, which Thou instillest into the hearts of Thy faithful ones, whence wondrous fruits do spring, did rejoice and give thanks to Thee, recalling what I before knew, how careful and anxious she had ever been, as to her place of burial, which she had provided and prepared for herself by the body of her husband. For because they had lived in great harmony together, she also wished (so little can the human mind embrace things divine) to have this addition to that happiness, and to have it remembered among men, that after her pilgrimage beyond the seas, what was earthly of this united pair had been permitted to be united beneath the same earth. But when this emptiness had through the fulness of Thy goodness begun to cease in her heart, I knew not, and rejoiced admiring what she had so disclosed to me, though indeed in that our discourse also in the window, when she said, "What do I

here any longer ? ” there appeared no desire of dying in her own country.’¹

MATTHEW ARNOLD

Monica's Last Prayer

“ Ah, could thy grave at home, at Carthage, be ! ”

“ *Care not for that, and lay me where I fall !*

Everywhere heard will be the judgment call !

But at God's altar, Oh ! remember me.”

Thus Monica, and died in Italy.

Yet fervent had her longing been, through all

Her course, for home at last, and burial

With her own husband, by the Libyan sea.

Had been ! but at the end, to her pure soul

All tie with all beside seem'd vain and cheap,

And union before God the only care.

Creeds pass, rites change, no altar standeth whole.

Yet we her memory, as she pray'd, will keep,

Keep by this : *Life in God, and union there !*

TENNYSON

Arthur says to Guinevere at their final meeting :

“ Let no man dream but that I love thee still.

Perchance, and so thou purify thy soul,

And so thou lean on our fair father Christ,

Hereafter in that world where all are pure

We two may meet before high God, and thou

Wilt spring to me, and claim me thine, and know

¹ *Confessions of St. Augustine.* Dr. Pusey's translation.

I am thine husband—not a smaller soul,
Nor Lancelot, nor another. Leave me that,
I charge thee, my last hope.’

JOHN RUSKIN

To George Richmond on the loss of his wife, Ruskin wrote in January 1881 :—

‘ My personal sorrow is haggard with terror for the future to you, and a cruel sense of the departure of all things that you loved in this the Head of them—and I do not know how far you will be able, in the knowledge of your own dearness to your children and your friends, to take from them what they may yet be able to give you of twilight gladness, and peace in waiting for the day of Restoration—of all things—and of her. Men say the time is near—a day is near, at least, of such trial of the spirits of all flesh as may well be called one of Judgment. I thank God that I am able still—with you—to be among those that Watch for the Morning—and still able to be thankful beside the places of rest of those whom I have loved, to whom Christ has said : “ Arise, thou, my fair one—and come away.” ’¹

¹ *Life of Ruskin*, by Sir E. T. Cook, vol. ii. p. 561.

RUSKIN'S MOTHER

Ruskin's mother was ninety when she died. 'She was laid to rest beside her husband, whom she trusted to see again—"not to be near him," she had said, "not to be so high in heaven, but content if she might only *see* him."' ¹

FRÉDÉRIC OZANAM

When Frédéric Ozanam was dying, he drew up a brief summary of his will, in which he referred with the utmost tenderness to his wife.

'I thank her, I bless her, and I await her in heaven. There only shall I be able to give her back all the love she merits.' ■

GEORGE HERBERT'S WIDOW

George Herbert's widow said :—

'O that I had, like holy Mary, the mother of Jesus, treasured up all his sayings in my heart ! But since I have not been able to do that, I will labour to live like him, that where he now is I may be also.'

¹ *Life of Ruskin*, by Sir E. T. Cook, vol. ii. p. 221.

² *Frédéric Ozanam d'après sa Correspondance*, par Mgr. Baunard (1912), p. 563.

BISHOP WILKINSON

Bishop G. H. Wilkinson wrote, after the death of his wife : ‘ We knew that she departed to be with Christ—in Christ—living to Christ—in that quiet home where no wind nor storm could ever disturb or depress, where the thunder’s roar and the lightning’s flash would no more make her nervous—gone before to wait till each of her sons and daughters, and he by whom these words are written, shall have finished their work on earth, and, washed from their sins in His blood and renewed by His Spirit, shall be for ever reunited with her.’ ¹

Many years after the death of his wife, Bishop Wilkinson wrote to a bereaved friend :—

‘ The Blessed Communion of Saints is indeed a mystery—but a mystery the truth of which we realise more and more as the years roll by. Soon after my own sorrow came—when life was rather hard—I was staying near your Devonshire home, and I went out one moonlight night. There was before me a tall tree with many branches. Some in the light, some in the shadow. By what I have

¹ *Life of Bishop G. H. Wilkinson*, vol. i. p. 348.

always felt to be a merciful inspiration from God, I suddenly realised that all those branches were one and all united to each other. Some were in the light, some in the shadow ; but they were all one as part of the tree. So I saw for life that she whom I loved, who was in the light, was as much one with me, who was left in the shadowland of earth, as we had been one when we were both on earth—as we should be one when, please God, we were both in the bright land of the Eternal Kingdom.’¹

CHARLES KINGSLEY

We read in Charles Kingsley’s *Life* that in his last weeks he ministered with tenderest affection to his wife who lay dangerously ill. The Angel of Death, for the first time in thirty-one years, seemed hovering over Eversley Rectory.

‘It is not darkness you are going to,’ he said, ‘for God is light. It is not lonely, for Christ is with you. It is not an unknown country, for Christ is there.’ And when the dreary interval before reunion was mentioned, he dwelt on the possibility of all consciousness of Time being so destroyed that what would be long years to the survivor might

¹ *Life of Bishop G. H. Wilkinson*, vol. ii. 299, 300.

be only a moment to the separated soul that had passed over the River of Death.

Over the grave in Eversley Churchyard, Kingsley's widow placed a white marble cross, on which, under a spray of his favourite passion-flower, are the words of his choice, the story of his life :—

‘ Amavimus, Amamus, Amabimus.’

And above them, circling round the cross, ‘ God is love,’ the keystone of his faith.

For the last two days before his departure Kingsley sent no messages to his wife, who was lying seriously ill in another room, for he thought she was gone, and that the dream of his life was fulfilled of their dying together. ‘ Under this impression, probably, when the faithful family nurse left his wife for a moment to come to her dying master, he said : “ Ah, dear nurse, *and I too*, am come to an end ; it is all right—all as it *should be*,” and closed his eyes again.’

F. D. MAURICE

F. D. Maurice wrote on All Saints' Day, 1847, with reference to his first wife, the sister-in-law of John Sterling :—

‘ This day reminds me that we have a host of invisible friends and each one of the members has, I believe and feel assured, special ministries for those who have been loved on earth. It is a thought which I can more easily realise for others than myself, and perhaps that is right. The selfish gratification would be too strong, the sense of evil desert not strong enough, if I could feel intensely I was an object of care and sympathy to any spirit. I am content or nearly content, to be without the vivid impression of any such blessedness. Yet sometimes when I find how the deepest truths, which are presented to me as the satisfaction of all that the Church needs and that I need, connect themselves with words she used to speak to me, how great reconciling principles, which, if I could declare them, might set the age free from some of its divisions, while they healed at the same time the schisms in families and the wounds in individual hearts, seem often still taught me by her, I cannot but feel as if perhaps it is not only a great poet who has his Beatrice, at once to bless earth and show him Heaven, but as if such a guide and helper might be granted to the dullest of earth’s pilgrims, if he has not quite lost the desire for God and his true

home. At least I would hope that such a blessing might belong to my boys—the sense of the presence of an unseen mother and the help of her love in dark hours.’

Again :—

‘I always say to myself when the question presents itself, Shall we recognise each other hereafter? Ah, how little we have recognised each other here! May not that be the first great step in recognition? I hope and trust that a number of hindrances to recognition and sympathy will be taken away, and that those who have had most of the taste of love will find that it is only the foretaste; that as it had its first seed, so it has its full fruit in the Kingdom of God.’¹

LAURA LYTTTELTON

Laura Tennant wrote before marriage to her betrothed husband, Alfred Lyttelton :—

‘And if anything happens, Alfred, before or after—if you are sad and all the mirage of many dreamed-of joys fades into sterner stuff, remember how in the silence—the half-hour of Silence—your

¹ *Life of F. D. Maurice*, vol. ii. p. 587.

footsteps coming near—or—God forbid that it should be so—fainting into the distance—will be one of the sounds most listened for in “the vasty Halls of Death”—only I think it should be life. Oh ! if I die first, think of me listening for the great strong echo of those strides—think of how I used to love them on earth—think of how I shall love them in Heaven ; and how the sound is dearer to me than the choir of God.’¹

Laura Tennant and Alfred Lyttelton were married on May 21, 1885. The short married life was an unbroken honeymoon. Laura’s sister Margot called on her early in the following April. The young wife said during a confidential talk that she was pretty sure she would die when her baby was born, and, with this in view, she had written her will, adding, ‘When I am dead and all of you round me in the room, I want you there and then to read this will out loud ; say I told you to, and then give it to Alfred—swear you won’t forget.’ A few days afterwards her child was born, and then, as she had anticipated, she passed away. The last part of her farewell message was as follows :—

¹ *Alfred Lyttelton : An Account of his Life*, p. 135.

‘ So few women have been as happy as I have been every hour since I married, so few have had such a wonderful sky of love for their common atmosphere, that perhaps it will seem strange, when I write down, that the sadness of death and parting is greatly lessened to me by the fact of my consciousness of the eternal indivisible oneness of Alfred and me—I feel as long as he is down here—I must be here, silently, secretly sitting beside him, as I do every evening now, however much my soul is on the other side—and that if Alfred too were to die, we should be as we were on earth—love as we did this year—only fuller, quicker, deeper than ever, with a purer passion and a wiser worship. Only in the meantime whilst my body is hid from him, and my eyes cannot see him, let my trivial toys be his till the morning comes, when nothing will matter because all is spirit.’

DR. MARTINEAU

Dr. Martineau wrote to Professor Knight in 1877, when Mrs. Martineau’s health was fast declining :—

‘ Our simple and sacred duty is to guide her descending steps over whatever grass and flowers

we can find, and soothe the last embrace with the inward calm of trust and love. It is but a brief separation ; the emigrant ship will soon be sent for me too ; and higher work—as I firmly hope through all the sadness of experience—be found for us together in another country, even a heavenly.’

After the closing scenes, Dr. Martineau wrote to another friend, the Rev. J. Hamilton Thom :—

‘ The gathering evening shadows lie more gently upon us ; and we may let our dear ones pass first to the new morning. The Everlasting Love keeps us safe for each other, whether there or here.’¹

To another friend he wrote :—

‘ The long and painful watching through the summer and autumn has ended as the poor sufferer herself could not but wish ; and we surrender that dear life with thankfulness and perfect trust, till the Infinite Love in which we live and die shall resume the interrupted communion.’²

In letters to bereaved friends, Dr. Martineau never hesitated to console them with the hope of reunion.

¹ *Life and Letters of James Martineau*, vol. ii. pp. 37, 39.

² *Ibid.*, vol. ii. p. 97.

GEORGE MACDONALD

In *Sir Gibbie*, George Macdonald wrote :—

‘ I fancy many when they die will find themselves more at home than they were in this world.’

“ I ’m growin’ terrible auld, Janet,” said Robert. “ It ’s a sair thing this auld age, an’ I canna bring mysel’ content wi’ ’t. Ye see, I haena been used till ’t.”

“ That ’s true, Robert,” answered Janet. “ Gi’en we had been born auld, we might by this time hae been at hame wi’ ’t. But syne what wad hae come o’ the gran’ delight o’ seein’ auld age rin hirplin awa’ frae the face o’ the Auncient o’ Days ? ”

“ Eh ! but I wuss I may hae ye there, Janet, for I kenna what I wad do wantin’ ye. I wad be unco stray up yon’er, gi’en I had to gang my lane, an’ no you to refar till, ’at kens the wy’s o’ the place.”

“ I ken no more about the wy’s o’ the place nor yersel’, Robert, though I ’m thinkin’ they ’ll be unco quaiet an’ sensible, seein’ ’at a’ there maun be gentle fowk. It’s eneuch to me ’at I ’ll be i’

the hoose o' my Maister's father; an' my Maister was weel content to gang to that hoose; an' it maun be something by ordinar' 'at was fit for *him*. But puir simple fowk like oorsel's 'll hae no need to hing down the heid an' luik like gowks 'at disna ken mainners. Bairns are no expeckit to ken a' the w'ys o' a muckle hoose 'at they hae never been intil i' their lives afore."

" "It's no that a'thegither 'at tribles me, Janet; it's mair 'at I 'll be expeckit to sing an' luik pleased-like, an' I div not ken hoo it 'll be poossible, an' you naegait 'ithin my sicht or my cry, or the hearin' o' my ears."

" "Div ye believe this, Robert—'at we're a' ane, jist ane, in Christ Jesus?"

" "I canna weel say. I'm no denyin' naething 'at the buik tells me; ye ken me better nor that, Janet; but there's mony a thing it says 'at I dinna ken whether I believe 't 'at my ain han', or whether it be only at a' thing 'at ye believe, Janet, 's jist to me as gien I believet it mysel'; an' that 's a sair thought, for a man canna be savet e'en by the proxy o' 's ain wife."

" "Weel, ye 're just muckle whaur I fin' mysel' whiles, Robert; an' I comfort mysel' wi' the houp

'at we 'll *ken* the thing there, 'at maybe we 're but tryin' to believe here. But ony gait ye hae pruv 't weel 'at you an' me 's ane, Robert. Noo we ken frae Scriptur' 'at the Maister cam to mak aye ane o' them 'at was at twa ; an' we ken also 'at he conquered Deith ; sae he wad never lat Deith mak the ane 'at he had made ane, intil twa again ; it 's no rizon to think it. For oucht I ken, what luiks like a gangin' awa may be a comin' nearer. An' there may be wy's o' comin' nearer till ane anither up yon'er 'at we ken naething aboot doon here.'

.

“ Hoot, Janet ! ye ken there 's naither merryin' nor giein' in merriage there.”

“ Wha was sayin' onything aboot merryin' or giein' in merriage, Robert ? Is that to say 'at you an' me 's to be no more to ane anither nor ither fowk ? Nor it 's no to say 'at 'cause merriage is no the w'y o' the country, 'at there 's to be naething better i' the place o' 't.”

“ What garred the Maister say onything aboot it than ? ”

“ Jist 'cause they plaguit him wi' speirin'. He wad never hae opened his moo' anent it—it wasna ane o' his subjec's—gien it hadna been 'at a^{at} when

pride-prankit beuk-fowk 'at didna believe there was ony angels, or speerits o' ony kin', but said 'at a man ance deid was aye an' a'thegither deid, an' yet preten'tit to believe in God Himsel' for a' that, thought to bleck (*nonplus*) the Maister wi' speirin' whilk o' saiven a puir body 'at had been garred merry them a', wad be the wife o' whan they gat up again."

" "A body nicht think it wad be left to hersel' to say," suggested Robert. "She had come throu' eneuch to hae some claim to be considert."

" "She maun hae been a richt guid ane," said Janet, "gien ilk ane o' the saiven wad be wantin' her again. But I's warran' she kenned weel eneuch whilk o' them was her ain." "

STOPFORD BROOKE

Stopford Brooke wrote to his widowed mother after the death of his father in 1882 :—

' I have never seen so beautiful a deathbed, none so quiet, so at rest, so individual, so wrapt in God. I hope there is a tender place in your heart, for that is the first and deepest thing I should imagine you would feel. It was not like death at all. It was going to sleep for a little on earth to waken into

glorious life. I think of him now as wrapt in enjoyment, as in eternal youth, all ailments and sorrows for ever lost, and as hoping for the time when you will "join him," and often and often as I watched him lying there, I said to myself, "Anna is waiting for him, to welcome him. He will not feel it strange in the new land." I feel it strange to see him no more here, and I am very sorry to miss his dear voice and no more to kiss the white smooth forehead, always so attractive; but my own grief vanishes wholly away in joy that he is so happy, so full of radiant delight, having life no longer burdened with distress, but able now to be as light and vivid and as young as in the far-off days when he wooed you by the Swilly, among the alders which you and I walked among some years ago after I had lost Emma.' ¹

CANON AND MRS. DREW

The following epitaph from Winchester Cathedral was inscribed by Mrs. Drew on the wall of Hawarden Church in memory of her husband, the late Canon Drew :—

'I, nimium dilecte; Deus vocat; I, bona nostrae
Pars animae; moerens altera, disce sequi.'

¹ *Life and Letters of Stopford Brooke*, vol. ii. p. 392.

Mr. George Wyndham translated the elegiac couplet thus :—

‘Lead on, too well-beloved ; go, happy part
Of our one soul ; God calls ; but teach my heart,
Mourning alone, to follow where thou art.’

Mr. J. W. Mackail preferred the following :—

‘Pass hence, beloved, at the call divine,
Leaving the path we twain as one have trod—
Pass, and the soul that still is one with thine
Thro’ grief shall learn to follow thee to God.’¹

T. E. BROWN

T. E. Brown wrote to a bereaved friend :—

‘My dear fellow-sufferer, what is it after all ? why this sinking of the heart, this fainting, sorrowing of the spirit ? There is no separation ; life is continuous. All that was stable and good, good and therefore stable, in our union with the loved one, is unquestionably permanent, will endure for ever. It cannot be otherwise. Can you conceive yourself as existing at all without *her* ? No, you can’t ; well, then, it follows that you don’t, and never will. The process of blending has been too complete to admit of separation. This is God’s blessing on

¹ *Some Hawarden Letters*, pp. 346-8.

perfect unions. But "the climbing mother" (*King Lear*) will rise unbidden, and what shall we do? *Corrigere est nefas*, so said poor Horace; there is a clenching of the teeth, on those words. Resignation then, O Flaccus, try that? and indeed he does with his *levius fit patientia*. But resignation to what? Some dark fate with dumb lips and eyes that are inscrutable? No, but to a kind and gracious Father.'

MAJOR REDMOND

The heroic Major Redmond, M.P., who was killed in the battle of Messines (June 1917) left a statement in the keeping of his solicitor in Ireland. It opened with these words: 'If I should die abroad, I will give my wife my last thought and love, and ask her to pray that we may meet hereafter.'

DINAH MORRIS IN 'ADAM BEDE'

Dinah Morris in *Adam Bede* comforts Lisbeth in her bereavement with the words of David, 'I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.' 'Thias Bede had been drowned in the Willow Brook, and the widow had refused comfort from her sons.

Dinah's gentle presence charmed away her sorrowful mood.

'There,' said Dinah, 'now the kitchen looks tidy, and now, dear mother—for I'm your daughter to-night, you know—I should like you to wash your face and have a clean cap on. Do you remember what David did, when God took away his child from him? While the child was yet alive he fasted and prayed to God to spare it, and he would neither eat nor drink, but lay on the ground all night, beseeching God for the child. But when he knew it was dead, he rose up from the ground and washed and anointed himself, and changed his clothes and ate and drank; and when they asked him how it was that he seemed to have left off grieving now the child was dead, he said, "While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."

"Eh, that's a true word," said Lisbeth. "Yea, my old man wanna come back to me, but I shall go to him—the sooner the better. Well, ye may do as ye like wi' me: there's a clean cap in that drawer,

and I'll go i' the back kitchen and wash my face. An' Seth, thee may'st reach down Adam's new Bible wi' th' picters in, an' she shall read us a chapter. Eh, I like them words. I shall go to him, but he wonna come back to me.'

MRS. HUMPHRY WARD

Mrs. Humphry Ward says of the widowed Catherine Elsmere :—

'Every Sunday morning, with her child beside her, she worshipped in the old ways ; every Sunday afternoon saw her black-veiled figure sitting motionless in a corner of the Elgood Street Hall. In the week she gave all her time and money to the various works of charity which Robert had started. But she held her peace. Many were grateful to her, some loved her ; none understood her. She lived for one hope only ; and the years passed all too slowly.'

GEORGE MEREDITH

In the epilogue to George Meredith's novel *Vittoria*, we are told how the beautiful heroine bore the death of her husband, Count Carlo Ammiani, who perished in an attempt to save his cousin and comrade, Angelo :—

‘Merthyr delivered the burden of death to Vittoria. Her soul had crossed the darkness of the river of death in that quiet agony preceding the revelation of her Maker’s will, and she drew her dead husband to her bosom and kissed him on the eyes and the forehead, not as one who had quite gone away from her, but as one who lay upon another shore whither she would come.’

LONGFELLOW

Longfellow, in one of his later poems, ‘*Via Solitaria*,’ dwells on the loneliness of the bereaved husband and his longing for reunion :—

‘ I live, O lost one ! for the living
Who drew their earliest life from thee,
And wait, until with glad thanksgiving
I shall be free.

For life to me is as a station
Wherein apart a traveller stands,
One absent long from home and nation
In other lands.

And I, as he who stands and listens,
Amid the twilight’s chill and gloom,
To hear, approaching in the distance
The train for home.

For death shall bring another mating,
Beyond the shadows of the tomb,
On yonder shores a bride is waiting
Until I come.

On yonder shores are children playing,
And there—oh ! vision of delight—
I see the child and mother straying
In robes of white.

Thou, then, the longing heart that breakest,
Stealing the treasures one by one,
I 'll call thee blessed when thou makest
The parted—one.'

ROBERT BROWNING

(Epilogue to *Fifine at the Fair*)

The Householder

I

'Savage I was sitting in my house, late, lone ;
Dreary, weary with the long day's work ;
Head of me, heart of me, stupid as a stone ;
Tongue-tied now, now blaspheming like a Turk ;
When, in a moment, just a knock, call, cry,
Half a pang and all a rapture, there again were we !
"What, and is it really you again ?" quoth I :
"I again, what else did you expect ?" quoth She.

II

“Never mind, hie away from the old house—

Every crumbling brick embrowned with sin and shame!

Quick, in its corners ere certain shapes arouse :

Let them—every devil of the night—lay claim,
Make and mend, or rap and rend, for me ! Good-bye !

God be their guard from disturbance at their glee,
Till, crash, comes down the carcass in a heap !”
quoth I :

“Nay, but there’s a decency required !” quoth
She.

III

“Ah, but if you knew how time has dragged, days,
nights !

All the neighbour-talk with man and maid—such
men !

All the fuss and trouble of street-sounds, window-
sights :

All the worry of flapping door and echoing roof ;
and then,

All the fancies . . . who were they had leave, dared try
Darker arts that almost struck despair in me ?

If you knew but how I dwelt down here !” quoth I :

“And was I so better off up there ?” quoth She.

IV

“Help and get it over ! *Re-united to his wife*

(How draw up the paper lets the parish-people
know ?)

Lies M., or N., departed from this life,

Day the this or that, month and year the so and so.

What i' the way of final flourish? Prose, verse?
Try!

Affliction sore long time he bore, or, what is it to be?
Till God did please to grant him ease. Do end!" quoth
I.

"I end with—Love is all and Death is nought!"
quoth She.'

JAMES GILMOUR, OF MONGOLIA

The great missionary James Gilmour, of Mongolia, lost his beloved wife at Peking. In his diary he wrote :—

'Emily saw all the women. She felt very weak to-day. Remarked at 7 P.M.: 'Well, Jamie, I am going, I suppose. I'll soon see you there. It won't be long.' I said she would not want me much there. She said fondly she would. 'I think I'll sit at the gate and look for you coming.'

In a letter to his children's uncle in Scotland, to whom Mr. Gilmour had decided to entrust the two boys after their mother's death, he writes :—

'Oh, it is hard to think of them going off over the world in that motherless fashion! We were at mamma's grave yesterday for the first time since September 21. We sang "There's a land that is fairer than day," in Chinese, and also a Chinese

hymn we have here with a chorus, which says, "We'll soon go and see them in our heavenly home," and in English, "There is a happy land." The children and I have no reluctance in speaking of mamma, and we don't think of her as here or buried, but as in a fine place, happy and well.'

In a letter to his father, Mr. Gilmour writes :—

'Let us not be disturbed at all about our not having more communication. I pray often for you and remember you more frequently still, and feel more and more that earth is a shifting scene, that here we have no permanent place, that heaven is our home, that your wife—my dear mother—has gone there, that my wife has gone there and is now in the Golden City, and that, sooner or later, you and I will be there, and that, when there, we'll have plenty of time to sit about and talk all together in a company.'

P. B. MARSTON

'It must have been for one of us, my own,
To drink this cup and eat this bitter bread.
Had not my tears upon thy face been shed,
Thy tears had dropped on mine ; if I alone

Did not walk now, thy spirit would have known
My loneliness, and did my feet not tread
This weary path and steep, thy feet had bled
For mine, and thy mouth had for mine made moan ;
And so it comforts me, yea, not in vain,
To think of thy eternity of sleep,
To know thine eyes are tearless though mine weep :
And when this cup's last bitterness I drain,
One thought shall still its primal sweetness keep—
Thou hadst the peace and I the undying pain.

WILLIAM BARNES

In his poem 'Plorata Veris Lachrymis,' the last stanza :—

'Thy voice is still I lov'd to hear,
Thy voice is lost I held so dear.
Since death unlocks thy hand from mine,
No love awaits me such as thine ;
Oh ! boon the hardest to resign !
But if we meet again at last
In heav'n, I little care how fast
My life may now be waning.'

DR. PUSEY

In his *Spiritual Letters* : 'To a husband on the death of his wife' :—

'You have, I trust, had every consolation which you could have had. At our age, partings cannot

be for long ; we have only to prepare for the Great Meeting.'

BISHOP CREIGHTON

To Clementina Lady Lilford, Bishop Creighton wrote :—

' I fear that life will seem to you dreary and empty for some time to come. Indeed in your case it has suddenly been emptied of its immediate contents. New interests can only slowly form ; and they will form round the consciousness that his character and person are an abiding possession, with a power to renew. At first the sense of bereavement and of loss is paramount . . . you have first to face the fact of an irreparable loss. But it is not a mere loss ; there is much that remains. The spirit survives, and is more clearly seen and more vividly understood. As you served the man while he was here, and rejoiced in his companionship ; so it is possible to serve still the abiding principles of his life—and find comfort in spiritual communing with it, a part of the eternal life of the world.

' I know that this seems cold and intangible. We do not know where to turn or what to do or think ; but processes are going on, healing processes of grace, which slowly make themselves manifest.

‘There is a beautiful sonnet of Petrarch, who sees Laura in heaven amongst the angels ; she walks amongst them, but from time to time turns her head and looks behind and seems to be waiting for him :

“ Wherefore I raise to heaven my heart and mind
Because I hear her bid me only haste.”

There remains a spell of life before the reunion ; it is not a desert, but has its beauties and its lessons. Can you think that you are separated from him for a time that you may learn to know him better ? that you may learn something more to tell him hereafter—something that he taught you to learn, but which you had not time to learn while he was with you, because you were too busied with him ? ’

DR. HENRY KING

Dr. Henry King (1592-1669), Bishop of Chichester.

‘ The Exequy ’ :

‘ Sleep on, my love, in thy cold bed,
Never to be disquieted !
Stay for me there ; I will not fail
To meet thee in that hollow vale . . .
The thought of this bids me go on,
And wait my dissolution,

With hope and comfort. Dear (forgive
The crime), I am content to live
Divided, with but half a heart,
Till we shall meet and never part.'

THE STORY OF WILLIAM AND LUCY SMITH

The stone inscribed with her husband's name
bears an added inscription, which she had dictated :

' To the memory also of
" his dear wife Lucy "
Who regained him here in life,
Dec. 14, 1881.
" Love is of God." '

MRS. GROTE

A friend of Mrs. Grote wrote to the *Spectator* :—

It would probably be too much to say that she
ever became a devout woman, but her recognition
of the Divine will was habitual, and found expression
in phrases which were especially significant on the
lips of one so naturally abhorrent of cant. I shall
not easily forget one Sunday night, at Shiere, when
our conversation turned upon the grounds for hope
in a life beyond the grave, how simply and earnestly
she avowed her trust in it, and in the reunion for
which she longed.

ROBERT BROWNING

‘ PROSPICE ’

‘ The elements’ rage, the fiend voices that rave,
 Shall dwindle, shall blend,
Shall change, shall become first a peace out of pain,
 Then a light, then thy breast.
O thou soul of my soul ! I shall clasp thee again,
 And with God be the rest ! ’

VII

FRIENDS

PART I.—TEACHERS AND GREAT ONES

Spenser had a vision of sweet companionship in the heavenly Jerusalem :

‘ As he thereon stood gazing, he might see
The blessed angels to and fro descend
From highest heaven, in gladsome companie,
And with great joy into that citie wend
As commonly as friend does with his friend.’ ¹

‘ The Lamb’s apostles there
I might with joy behold,
The harpers I might hear
Harping on harps of gold.’

S. CROSSMAN.

‘ Thou shalt look about, and see
Thousands of crown’d soules throng to be
Themselves thy crown.’

RICHARD CRASHAW ON ST. TERESA.

Gerald Massey’s ballad, ‘ Sir Richard Grenville’s Last Fight,’ ends:

‘ Old Heroes who could grandly do,
As they could greatly dare ;
A vesture, very glorious,
Their shining spirits wear,
Of noble deeds ! God give us grace,
That we may see such face to face,
In one great day that comes apace.’

¹ *The Faerie Queene*, i. x. 56.

‘We must come to see that man is eternal and divine in his own right, and that he is working towards the only possible and conceivable heaven,—a republic of pure, wise, loving, energetic spirits, rising to ever completer harmony and closer intimacy with each other.’

THOMAS DAVIDSON.¹

RICHARD BAXTER

RICHARD BAXTER names among the ‘comfortable adjuncts’ of the ‘Saints’ Everlasting Rest,’ that it is the fellowship of the blessed saints and angels of God. ‘Not so singular will the Christian be as to be solitary. Though it be proper to the saints only, yet it is common to all the saints. For what is it but an association of blessed spirits in God ; a corporation of perfected saints whereof Christ is the Head ; the communion of saints completed ? . . . Though the strings receive not their sound and sweetness from each other, yet their concurrence causeth that harmony which could not be by one alone. For those that have prayed and fasted and wept and watched and waited together, now to joy and enjoy and praise together, methinks should much advance their pleasure. . . . Certain I am of this, fellow-Christians, that as we have been together in the labour, duty, danger and distress,

¹ *Memoirs of Thomas Davidson, the Wandering Scholar*, by William Knight, p. 151.

so shall we be in the great recompense and deliverance.'

Baxter, who lived in an age of persecution, consoled himself with thoughts of reunion.

'Oh, when I look in the faces of the precious people of God, and believing, think of this day, what a refreshing thought is it? Shall we not there remember, think you, the pikes which we passed through here; our fellowship in duty and in sufferings; how oft our groans made, as it were, one sound, our conjunct tears but one stream, and our conjunct desires but one prayer? And now all our praises shall make up one melody; and all our churches one church; and all ourselves but one body; for we shall be one in Christ, even as He and the Father are one.'¹

JOHN MILTON

Milton imagines that Lycidas is received by holy spirits in the "blest kingdoms meek of joy and love.'

'There entertain him all the saints above,
In solemn troops, and sweet societies,
That sing, and, singing in their glory move,
And wipe the tears for ever from his eyes.'

¹ *The Saints' Everlasting Rest.*

ST. TERESA

The Spanish Franciscan Reformer of the sixteenth century, St. Peter of Alcantara, blessed the work of St. Teresa, the great Carmelite, in his closing days. 'His end was like his life,' wrote Teresa, 'preaching and admonishing his friars. As the end drew near, he repeated the Psalm, *Laetatus sum in his quae dicta sunt mihi*, and then kneeling died.' At the moment when he expired he appeared to her in great glory, and said he was going to rest. 'It appears to me,' added Teresa, 'that he consoles me more than when he was here with me.'¹

ADMIRAL GRAVINA

When Gravina, the admiral who commanded the Spanish ships at the battle of Trafalgar, was nearing his end, he turned to the doctor who was attending him and said : ' I am a dying man, but I hope and trust that I am going to join the greatest hero the world almost ever produced.' 'This,' says Mr. Archibald Hurd, 'was the last thought of that seaman on his death-bed ; his mind turned to Nelson, the brother-in-arms of the great sea-family

¹ Mrs. Cunninghame Graham's *Life of St. Teresa*, p. 228.

who, under another national flag, had defeated him, and he found consolation in the belief that he would join him.’¹

DEAN STANLEY

When a friend thanked Dean Stanley for his vivid picture of the noble Judas Maccabaeus, the reply came: ‘Yes, I have done my best for him,’ and, drawing his slight form together, and looking up as if he saw the mighty shade of the Jewish patriot approaching, the Dean added: ‘I hope he will be kind to me when we meet in another world.’

DR. JOHN BROWN

Dr. John Brown wrote in his *Horae Subsecivae* paper on Dr. Chalmers:—

‘We cannot help following him, whose loss we now mourn, into that region, and figuring to ourselves his great, childlike spirit, when . . . he is admitted into the goodly fellowship of the apostles—the glorious company of the prophets—the noble army of martyrs—the general assembly of just men—and beholds with his loving eyes the myriads of “little ones,” outnumbering their elders as the

¹ *Ordeal by Sea*, by Archibald Hurd, p. 3.

dust of the stars with which the galaxy is filled exceeds in multitude the hosts of heaven.'

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'Every one must have trembled when reading that passage in Isaiah, in which Hell is described as moved to meet Lucifer at his coming : there is not in human language anything more sublime in conception, more exquisite in expression ; it has on it the light of the terrible crystal. But may we not reverse the scene ? May we not imagine, when a great and good man—a son of the morning—enters on his rest, that Heaven would move itself to meet him at his coming ? That it would stir up its dead, even all the chief ones of the earth, and that the kings of the nations would arise each one from his throne to welcome their brother ? that those who saw him would “ narrowly consider him,” and say, “ Is this he who moved nations, enlightened and bettered his fellows, and whom the great Task-master welcomes with ‘ Well done ! ’ ” ’

MARGARET FULLER

Margaret Fuller wrote of Emerson :—

'My inmost heart blesses the fate that gave me birth in the same clime and time, and that has

drawn me into such a close bond with him as, it is my hopeful faith, will never be broken, but from sphere to sphere ever be hallowed. When I look forward to eternal growth, I am always aware that I am far larger and deeper for him.'

BISHOP EDWARD KING

Bishop King of Lincoln wrote to a friend in sorrow :
' Please God, in Paradise we may meet those whose prayers and early death may have helped to bring us there. May you, by God's blessing, one day join them, and then you will know that all your pain and love and sorrow were not in vain.' ¹

B. M.

(From a ' Parable of Hope,' by ' B. M.')

' And, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.'
—Acts xxvii. 24.

' At that dim mysterious Hour of Peace,
That Dawn of death in which tears must cease,
Ere we pass from the faintly moaning Sea
To the Haven that shineth glad and free,
Still Love will pray from the shadowy Sea,
" Save, Master, the souls that sail with me ! "
And the Lord will hear
In His kingdom near,
And send her a word of hope and cheer.

¹ *Spiritual Letters.*

He giveth us peace at the last, they say,
And *more* than all for which Love can pray :
Will He send a sweet Angel to say to me,—
“ Go in peace, to the Land of the joyful and free
For God hath given this day to thee
The souls thou hast prayed for steadfastly ?
“ Go in peace, this day, to the Haven wide ;
Thou shalt see His face and be satisfied ;
Thou shalt know His heart and rest in Him
With a peace that passeth thy knowledge dim
Not for thyself alone, but for all
Thy heart hath yearned for, great and small.
“ And some shall enter the Haven wide,
Full-sail, on the breast of a glorious tide ;
And some shall come
To our golden Home
Sore battered and spent from an angry sea ;
But thine heart shall count them, one by one,
And leap for joy as they greet the Sun,
Till God has gathered them all to thee.” ’

MRS. OLIPHANT

Mrs. Oliphant wrote, shortly before her death, to Mrs. Richmond Ritchie (February 16, 1897):—

‘ You ’ll go to see George Macdonald—will you not ? at Bordighera. Tell him I am not so patient as he is, but longing very much for the new chapter of life, where I hope we shall meet and talk all things over with better light upon them than here.’

PART II.—PERSONAL FRIENDS

‘Without friends no one would choose to live, though he possessed all other good things.’—ARISTOTLE.

‘A day for toil, an hour for sport,
But for a friend is life too short.’

EMERSON.

‘It is a pity, saith Mr. Bolton, that Christians should ever meet together without some talk of their meeting in heaven, or the way to it, before they part.’—RICHARD BAXTER.

‘I believe in an active, human life, beyond death as before it, an uninterrupted human life. I believe in no waiting in the grave, and in no vague effluence of spirit in a formless vapour.’

E. B. BROWNING.

SAINT BERNARD AND ABBOT SUGER

ST. BERNARD thus addressed his dear and most intimate friend Suger, Abbot of St. Denys.

‘That peace awaiteth thee which passeth all understanding. The righteous await for thee to behold thee receive thy reward. The joy of thy Lord awaiteth thee. And I, my dearest friend, am anxiously desiring to see thee, that the blessing of one about to die may come upon me. And since no one can choose the way he would traverse, I dare not, as I am not certain, promise to come of a surety; but though I do not yet see how I can

come, I do quite what I can. Perchance I may come : perchance I may not come. But whichever of these it may be, I have loved thee from the very first, and shall love thee onwards unceasingly. I say, with faithfulness, I cannot lose so loved a friend, even at the last. To me he doth not die, but he goeth on before, he to whose soul mine own hath clung and hath been cemented with a hold which will not be unloosed, and with a chain which cannot be broken. But remember me when thou shalt have gone whither thou goest before me, so that it may be granted to me to follow thee and to come to thee. Until then in no way think that thy sweet memory may depart from me, though thy presence is withdrawn from thy grieving friends. God is, however, able to give thee to us in answer to our prayers, and to preserve thee for us who have need of thee ; of this we must assuredly have no doubt.'

Of Saint Victor, Bernard wrote :—

' The veteran soldier resteth now in due sweetness and security ; secure indeed as to himself, but anxious for us. It is not a land of forgetfulness, that which the soul of Victor inhabiteth ; it is not a

land of toil, in which he becometh wholly absorbed ; it is not indeed earth, but heaven. Will a celestial habitation harden the souls of those whom it receiveth, or deprive them of memory, or despoil them of kindness ? Brothers, the breadth of heaven dilateth, not narroweth, hearts; exhilarateth minds, not alienateth them from reason ; it doth not contract the affections, but expandeth them. In the light of God the memory is made bright and is not obscured ; in the light of God is learnt what was not known, and what is known is not unlearned. Those supernal spirits, who inhabit heaven from the beginning, do they because they dwell in heaven despise the earth ? Do they not rather visit it and frequent it ? Because they always behold the face of the Father, doth affection disappear from their ministry ? Are they not rather ministering spirits, sent forth to minister unto those who are heirs of salvation ? What then ? Shall angels run to and fro, and succour men, and shall they who are from ourselves, lose all knowledge of us, and not know how to have sympathy with us in the things which they themselves have suffered ? Shall they be unconscious of our sorrows, who nevertheless have known them ? Shall they who

have come out of great tribulation have no recognition of those who are still in tribulation ? ’

STORY OF HEREBERT AND CUTHBERT, IN
BEDE’S ‘ ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY,’ BOOK IV.

CHAPTER 29

Bishop Cuthbert, who had received a visit from Herebert at the city of Carlisle, ‘ among other things, said, “ Brother Herebert, remember at this Time to ask me all the Questions you would have resolved, and say all you design ; for we shall see one another no more in this World. For I am sure that the Time of my Dissolution is at hand, and I shall speedily lay down this Tabernacle.” He, hearing these words, fell down at his Feet, and shedding Tears, with a Sigh, said, “ I beseech you by our Lord not to forsake me ; but that you remember your most faithful Companion, and intreat the supreme Goodness, that as we serv’d Him together upon Earth, we may depart together to see His Bliss in Heaven.” . . . The Bishop apply’d himself to Prayer, and having presently had Intimation in the Spirit, that he had obtain’d what he begg’d of our Lord, he said, “ Rise, Brother, and do not weep, but rejoice, because the heavenly

Goodness has granted what we desir'd." The Event prov'd the Truth of this Promise and Prophecy, for after their parting at that Time, they no more saw one another corporally ; but their Souls quitting their Bodies, on the very same Day, that is, on the 13th Day of the Kalends of April, they were immediately again united in the beatifical vision, and translated to the Heavenly Kingdom by the Ministry of Angels.'

SIR THOMAS MORE

' Mr. Pope taking his leave of him could not refrain from weeping, which Sir Thomas More perceiving, comforted him in this wise, " Quiet yourself, good Mr. Pope, and be not discomforted. For I trust that we shall once in heaven see each other full merrily, where we shall be sure to live and love together in joyful bliss eternally." '

QUEEN VICTORIA

Queen Victoria wrote in her private Journal after meeting Lord Tennyson at Osborne in 1883 :—

' He talked of the many friends he had lost, and what it would be if he did not feel and know that there was another world, where there would be no

partings ; and then he spoke with horror of the unbelievers and philosophers who would make you believe there was no other world, no Immortality, who tried to explain all away in a miserable manner. We agreed that were such a thing possible, God, Who is Love, would be far more cruel than any human being.’¹

THOMAS CARLYLE

Carlyle wrote to John Forster (September, 1853) :—

‘ Alas, the inexorable years, that cut away from us, one after another, the true souls whom we loved, who loved us truly : that is the real bitterness of life ; against which there is no remedy, and natural tears must fall ! But we ourselves, my friend, it is not long we have to stay behind ; we too shall find a shelter in the Silent Kingdoms : and much despicability that barked and snarled incessantly round us *here* shall there be without the walls for evermore. “ Blessed are the Dead.” I often silently say : “ If we had done our work, it were good for us to be dead too—and safe with all our loved ones round us, There ! ” ’

¹ *Alfred Lord Tennyson, A Memoir, by his son, vol. ii. p. 457.*

NORMAN MACLEOD

We read in the *Life of Norman Macleod*, that while the future state, the society, occupations and joys of the blessed dead had been a favourite theme with him for many years, during the last days of his life it seemed to engross his thoughts. No friend could be with him for many minutes without his reverting to it.

In his last letter to Principal Shairp, Dr. Macleod wrote :

‘As I feel time so rapidly passing, I take your hand, dear old friend, with a firmer grasp. I have many friends ; few old ones !

‘Oh that I loved my oldest and truest, my Father and Saviour, better ! But should I enter heaven as a forlorn ship, dismasted, and a mere log—it is enough—for I will be repaired.’

On his last birthday (June 3, 1872) he wrote in his *Journal*: ‘I am this day three score years. The Lord is mysterious in His ways. I bless and praise Him. I commit myself and my all into His loving hands, feeling the high improbability of such a birthday as this being ever repeated. But we shall be united after the last birthday into heaven.’

GOETHE

Stopford Brooke quotes these words of Goethe, written at the age of seventy-two :—

‘ “In our Father’s Kingdom there are many provinces, and as He has given us here so happy a resting-place, so will He certainly care for us above. Perhaps we shall be blessed with what here on earth has been denied us, to know one another merely by seeing one another, and thence more fully to love one another.” ’¹

HARRIET BEECHER STOWE

Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote to Lady Byron in 1857 :—

‘ I have got past the time when I feel that my heavenly friends are *lost* by going there. I feel them *nearer*, rather than farther off. So good-bye, dear, dear friend, and if you see morning in our Father’s house before I do, carry my love to those that wait for me, and if I pass first, you will find me there, and we shall love each other for *ever*.’

In *The Minister’s Wooing* Harriet Beecher Stowe

¹ *Life and Letters of Stopford Brooke*, vol. ii. p. 397.

tells of hours of vision wherein the meetings of eternity are foreshadowed :

‘ As there was an hour when the fishermen of Galilee saw their Master transfigured, His raiment white and glistening, and His face like the light, so are there hours when our whole mortal life stands forth in the celestial radiance. From our daily lot falls off every weed of care—from our heart-friends every speck and stain of earthly infirmity. Our horizon widens, and blue and amethyst and gold touch every object. Absent friends and friends gone on the last long journey stand once more together, bright with an immortal glow, and like the disciples who saw their Master floating in the clouds above them, we say, “ Lord, it is good to be here ! ” How fair the wife, the husband, the absent mother, the grey-haired father, the manly son, the bright-eyed daughter ! Seen in the actual present, all have some fault, some flaw ; but absent, we see them in their permanent and better selves. Of our distant home we remember not one dark day, not one servile care, nothing but the echo of its holy hymns and the radiance of its brightest days—of our father, not one hasty word, but only the fulness of his manly vigour and

noble tenderness—and of our mother, nothing of mortal weakness, but a glorified form of love—of our brother, not one teasing, provoking word of brotherly freedom, but the proud beauty of his noblest hours—of our sister, our child, only what is fairest and sweetest.

‘This is to life the true ideal, the calm glass wherein looking, we shall see that, whatever defects cling to us, they are not, after all, permanent, and that we are tending to something nobler than we yet are :—it is “the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession.” In the resurrection we shall see our friends for ever as we see them in these clairvoyant hours.’¹

BISHOP FRANCIS PAGET

Bishop Francis Paget wrote to a bereaved friend :

‘May the God of all comfort help and comfort you day by day—strengthening you according to all your need : and ever refreshing in you the great hope that bears light into our bereavement : the hope that by His grace we may be so led through

¹ *The Minister's Wooing*, chapter xx.

the things of this world that we come to the gladness of a meeting, beyond all pain or grief or severance.'

When Bishop Paget was dying, those around him spoke of the dead whom he would see again. 'So soon!' he answered.

DEAN GREGORY

Of the last days of the venerable Dean Gregory, his friend and colleague, Dr. Scott Holland, writes :—

'He was absorbed in the interest of the unseen world. He would not attend to those who talked to him. "I am very interested," he explained, while he seemed to be speaking to old friends, and said "Quite so! quite so!" several times.'

DR. FRÉDÉRIC GODET

Dr. Frédéric Godet wrote, at the age of eighty-six, to his dying friend, Félix Bovet :—

'The end of all things will be the eternal Alleluia. There is the haven where we shall meet again, "hidden," as Vinet says, "in universal joy."'

DR. CHALMERS

One of Dr. Chalmers's most attached friends in the earlier part of his career was Mr. Thomas Smith, at whose death he wrote : ' I received with much interest the very touching memorial you have sent me of one with whom I have held sweet counsel on earth, and to whose society in heaven I look forward with such a confidence as, I trust, the Gospel warrants, and for which the influences of the Gospel can alone prepare me.'

The memorial was a ring with Mr. Smith's hair. After being laid aside for many years, it was resumed and worn by Dr. Chalmers for a month during the year which preceded his own death.

THOMAS ERSKINE

Thomas Erskine of Linlathen wrote at the death of his friend, Dr. Charles Stuart :—

' His soul had the mark of God upon it. The desire of his soul was after God, and his business was to understand the will and word of God. I think it was on the Monday after he was taken ill that he said to me, as I was pressing his hand

on taking leave, "*I hope to spend an eternity with you.*" ' ¹

DR. MARTINEAU

Dr. Martineau wrote at the age of ninety-three, to his friend, the Rev. W. Orme White :—

' The year just passed has bereft me of several best-beloved friends—revered like F. W. Newman, as both Teacher and Colleague, or delighted-in like Richard H. Hutton, as pupil "grown wiser than his teachers." But the more nearly lifelong these companionships have been, the less distant is the morrow of their restoration ; for which surely the old nonagenarian may wait in quietude of faith.' ²

BISHOP EDWARD KING

In his letters to mourners, the saintly Bishop Edward King constantly refers to the hope of reunion. Late in life he wrote to a friend who had lost her father :—

' It becomes very hard to keep a brave and cheerful interest in life when so many are leaving us. We must be thankful for the comfort of their love,

¹ *Letters of Thomas Erskine* (1877), vol. i. p. 73.

² *Life and Letters of James Martineau*, vol. ii. p. 244.

and try and look forward and upward to the life above. This life seems to be the place for making friendships. The next, we hope, will be for enjoying them.' ¹

R. W. DALE

Dr. Dale preached a beautiful sermon in memory of his old college friend, the Rev. E. S. Glanville, of Warwick. He told how the dying minister had requested his father and sister to sing to him his favourite hymn, and they sat in the chamber of death and sang :—

‘ There is a land of pure delight,
Where saints immortal reign ;
Infinite day excludes the night,
And pleasures banish pain.’

‘ The ethereal purity of his spirit,’ said the surviving comrade, ‘ has not been lost to the universe of souls ; it has only thrown off whatever stained and obscured it, and been placed beyond the possibility of pollution. His tenderness and strength are now conferring on his intercourse with the spirits of just men made perfect a peculiar and indestructible charm. . . Only his imperfections have

¹ *Spiritual Letters.*

perished ; he has carried with him into heaven all that constituted his truest, innermost life. He *is* perfectly now all that he was gradually and laboriously *becoming* when he was with us.' ¹

DR. JOHN KER

Dr. John Ker wrote :

' I have the firm belief that the future world is not cut off from this, but one with it—one through Him who is Lord both of the living and the dead. Those who enter into it retain a personal and conscious existence near to Him, and He will find means of keeping up their connection, I do well believe, with that world which they have left. It is agreeable both to reason and Scripture that this should be so, and it is very consolatory to us to think that we and our dear friends shall still have real union—it is very likely—of knowledge and communication. In some way He will inform them of what is transpiring here, or make them see it, for all the great victories of God's Kingdom on earth are celebrated with songs of praise in heaven.' ²

¹ *Hope in Death, A Sermon.*

² *Letters.*

Dr. Ker writes again :—

‘ In this world we recognise our friends by the face and form of the body. This slowly changes, till at death it utterly disappears in the common dust. In the world to come we shall recognise each other by the soul. Even here there are indications of it. That word, that act, was like himself.’

PHILLIPS BROOKS

Bishop Phillips Brooks wrote at the age of thirty-seven :—

‘ I wonder what *sort* of knowledge we shall have of our friends when we get to the other side, and what we shall do to keep up our intimacy with one another. There will be one good thing about it. I suppose we shall see right through one another to begin with, and start off on quite a new basis of mutual understanding. It will be awful at first, but afterwards it must be quite pleasant to feel that your friends know the worst of you and not be continually in danger and in fear that they will find you out. But then with all eternity ahead there must be a constantly oppressive fear that your friends will get tired of you.’ ¹

¹ *Life and Letters of Phillips Brooks*, by A. V. G. Allen, vol. ii. p. 86.

Bishop Vail of Kansas wrote in 1885 to his friend Phillips Brooks :—

‘What times by and by, when in the blessed home we shall all meet and talk over the past, when our work here is done, and we come home from our work there, from time to time, and chat over the past of our work here, in these abiding mansions. May God pity our imperfections and pardon our sins, and admit us to see the King in His beauty and glory, and evermore to work for Him.’¹

BISHOP G. H. WILKINSON

Bishop G. H. Wilkinson described in a letter to Bishop Benson the last hours of a lady who had been his dead wife’s closest friend. ‘When the spirit was gone, I tried to realise their meeting—Cara seeing her. How do spirits see? What does the word mean there? I lost myself thinking, but instead, there seemed to come a strange sort of realisation of the two being together, and then I went back in spirit, to think of my own Cara separate from all other, *εν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ* (in Christ Jesus) and allowed, whenever it was good for us, to

¹ *Life of Bishop Phillips Brooks*, vol. ii. p. 565.

be with me in a way different from the way in which any one but a wife could be.' ¹

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

'For thee, for us, the sacred river waits,
For me, the unworthy, thee, the perfect friend ;
There Blame desists, there his unfaltering dogs
He from the chase recalls, and homeward rides ;
Yet Praise and Love pass over and go in.
So when, beside that margin, I discard
My more than mortal weakness, and with thee
Through that still land unfearing I advance ;
If then at all we keep the touch of joy
Thou shalt rejoice to find me altered—I,
O Felix, to behold thee still unchanged.' ²

WORDSWORTH

'O dearer far than light and life are dear,
Full oft our human foresight I deplore ;
Trembling, through my unworthiness, with fear
That friends, by death disjoined, may meet no
more !

Misgivings, hard to vanquish or control,
Mix with the day, and cross the hour of rest ;
While all the future, for thy purer soul,
With "sober certainties" of love is blest.'

¹ *Life of Bishop Wilkinson*, vol. ii. p. 32.

² Robert Louis Stevenson's *Songs of Travel*.

E. B. BROWNING

Futurity

‘ And, O belovèd voices, upon which
Ours passionately call because erelong
Ye brake off in the middle of that song
We sang together softly, to enrich
The poor world with the sense of love, and witch
The heart out of things evil—I am strong,
Knowing ye are not lost for aye among
The hills, with last year’s thrush. God keeps a niche
In Heaven to hold our idols ; and albeit
He brake them to our faces and denied
That our close kisses should impair their white,
I know we shall behold them raised, complete,
The dust swept from their beauty—glorified
New Memories singing in the great God-light.’

DORA GREENWELL

(From *Carmina Crucis*)

‘ At noon-tide came a voice “ Thou must away ;
Hast thou some look to give, some word to say,
Or hear, of fond farewell ? ” I answered, “ Nay.”

My soul hath said its farewell long ago,
How light, when Summer comes, the loosened snow
Slides from the hills ! yet tell me, *where I go*,

Doth any wait for me ? Then like the clear
Full drops of summer rain that seem to cheer
The skies they fall from, soft within mine ear,

And slow, as if to render through that sweet
Delay a blest assurance more complete,
“ Yea,” only “ yea ” was whisper’d me, and then
A silence that was unto it, Amen.’

DR. LIVINGSTONE

Livingstone¹ to his friend Sir Roderick Murchison :—

‘ May blessings be on you and yours, and if we never meet again on earth, may we through infinite mercy meet in heaven ! ’

IZAACK WALTON

thus concludes his life of Dr. John Donne :—

‘ He was earnest and unwearied in the search of knowledge, with which his vigorous soul is now satisfied, and employed in a continual praise of that God that first breathed it into his active body ; that body, which once was a Temple of the Holy Ghost, and is now become a small quantity of Christian dust : but I shall see it re-animated.’

¹ Blaikie’s *Personal Life of Livingstone*, chapter xi.

LONGFELLOW

In his poem 'Auf Wiedersehen'

'Faith overleaps the confines of our reason,
And if by faith, as in old times was said,
Women received their dead
Raised up to life, then only for a season
Our partings are, nor shall we wait in vain
Until we meet again !'

LOUISE CHANDLER MOULTON

'Some day or other I shall surely come
Where true hearts wait for me :
Then let me learn the language of that home
While here on earth I be,
Lest my poor lips for want of words be dumb
In that high company.'

PÈRE GRATRY

Life of Henri Perreye (English trans., p. 206)

Gratry writes, appealing to the saints in heaven:—

'Comfort us in that death hour, which ever
draws nearer, if it may be, by some conscious
indication of the friendly band of living and
loving souls which await each one of us with a
joyous welcome on the other side of Jordan.'

MISCELLANEOUS TESTIMONIES FROM HISTORY AND LITERATURE

PLUTARCH

PLUTARCH'S Essay on 'Pleasure not attainable, according to the rules of Epicurus' criticises (paragraph 28) the Epicureans for robbing men of the joy and pleasure of expecting reunion after death. He says: 'If, as Epicurus admits, "the recollection of a dead friend is utterly sweet," we can well understand what a joy men deprive themselves of, if they imagine they are only to cherish and haunt the wraiths and phantoms of their dead companions, and never again to be with their very selves, never to see their own fathers and mothers and good wives, never expecting that affectionate intercourse of spirits which is anticipated by all who share the views of Pythagoras, Plato, and Homer.'

THE DELPHIC ORACLE

Porphyry has preserved for us a remarkable utterance of the Pythian priestess at Delphi, given

in answer to the inquiry : ‘ Where is now the soul of Plotinus ? ’ F. W. H. Myers, in his essay on *Greek Oracles*, says that this poem, whatever its source, stands out to us as one of the most earnest utterances of antiquity. ‘ Nowhere, indeed, is the contest more apparent between the intensity of the emotions which are struggling for utterance and the narrow limits of human speech, which was composed to deal with the things that are known and visible, and not with those that are inconceivable and unseen.’

The translation by Myers includes these lines :—

‘ Pure spirit—once a man—pure spirits now
Greet thee rejoicing, and of these art thou ;
.
.
.
Now from about thee, in thy new home above,
Has perished all but life, and all but love,—
And on all lives and on all loves outpoured
Free grace and full, a Spirit from the Lord,
High in that heaven whose windless vaults enfold
Just men made perfect, and an age all gold.
Thine own Pythagoras is with thee there
And sacred Plato in that sacred air,
And whoso followed, and all high hearts that knew
In death’s despite what deathless Love can do.
To God’s right hand they have scaled the starry way—
Pure spirits these, thy spirit pure as they.

Ah, saint ! how many and many an anguish past,
To how fair haven art thou come at last !
On thy meek head what Powers their blessing pour
Filled full with life, and rich for evermore ! ' ¹

CYPRIAN

The earliest Father of the Church who gave voice to this hope in any warmth of detail was Cyprian. We give a few sentences from his treatise *De Mortalitate* (written 253 A.D.) :—

‘ What person, hurrying on a voyage to his own people, would not eagerly desire a favourable wind, that he might speedily be able to embrace his dear ones ? We reckon Paradise our home-land. Already we begin to have the patriarchs as our sires. What haste and speed do we not make, that we may behold our home-land and hail our sires ? A great host of dear ones is waiting for us, parents, brothers, sons ; a vast crowd longs for us, already sure of their own immortality, but still anxious about our salvation. What a joy for them and for us, that we come to see them and embrace them ! What delights are in the heavenly kingdom there, with not a fear of death and with an eternity of

¹ F. W. H. Myers, *Essays Classical*, pp. 99, 100.

life ! What supreme, what lasting felicity ! There is the noble band of the apostles, the host of rejoicing prophets, the innumerable company of martyrs, crowned for their victory in the strife and suffering ; there are the triumphant virgins, who overcame the desire of the flesh and body by the strength of their continence ; there the merciful are rewarded who did work of righteousness by succouring and benefiting the poor, who kept the Lord's precepts and transferred their earthly patrimony to the heavenly treasury. Thither, O beloved brethren, let us hasten with eager desire, that we may long to be with them soon, that we may soon come to Christ.'

JEROME

In 399 A.D. Jerome writes (Ch. lxxv.) to a Spanish lady, Theodora, to comfort her after the death of her husband Lucinius :—

‘ When we have to face the hard and cruel necessity of death, what upholds us is the consoling thought that we shall soon see again those whose absence we are now lamenting. Lucinius, now a victor and free from care, looks down on you from on high, supports you in your struggle, nay more, is preparing for you a place near himself ;

for his love and affection are still the same towards you.' Jerome then explains that when Jesus said, 'They shall be like the angels in heaven' (Matt. xxii. 30), He did not mean that human beings would lose their identity. 'They shall be *like the angels*; that is, they will not cease to be human. The Apostle Paul will still be Paul, Mary will still be Mary.'

MEDIAEVAL

Cynewulf, the Anglo-Saxon author (end of eighth century), in the almost rapturous *Crist* (1650 f.) thus describes heaven :—

'There is the song of angels, the beatitude of the Church, . . . the love of loved ones, amity between friends hereafter without feud, peace without any discussion among the blessed in heaven.'

The Sieur de Joinville, in his *Life of King Louis IX.*, gives a record of the last instructions of the dying monarch to his son and heir. After instructions about ruling justly, the King concludes :—

'Finally, my very dear son, I give thee all the blessings that a good father can give to his son. And may the Trinity and all the saints keep and defend thee from all evils : and God give thee grace

to do His will always, so that He be honoured in thee, and that thou and I may both, after this mortal life is ended, be with Him together and praise Him everlastingly. Amen.'

THE REFORMATION AGE

Bishop Coverdale's translation ¹ of the treatise on *Death* by Otho Vierdmullerus, chapter xxxiii., 'The Faithful shall know one another in Heaven':—

'Then also shall the blessed know one another again, having joy together, and rejoicing in the obtained health. For if there should be no knowledge, to what end then should the bodies rise again; or what fruit and profit should the resurrection have; or how might the sentence of Daniel the prophet be verified, when he saith, "They that have instructed and taught others godliness, shall shine, and be as light as the stars in the firmament"?''

'When we talk of death and of the state and ease of the life to come, we say, though now we must depart asunder, yet shall we see one another again in the eternal country.'

¹ Parker Society's edition (1846).

‘Socrates also, the right famous and most excellent among all the wise men of the heathen, marked such a like thing, and saw it as in a dream, when, as Cicero witnesseth of him, he was of death condemned of the judges or council, and now should drink the poison. For he said: “O, how much better and more blessed it is to go unto them, that well and uprightly lived here in time, than to remain here in this life upon earth! O, how dear and worthy a thing it is, that I may talk with Orpheus, Ulysses, Homerus, Hesiodus, with those excellent men! Verily, I would not only die once, but many and sundry times also, if it were possible, to obtain the same,” etc.’

Dr. Hay Fleming sends us these words of John Knox:—

‘Rejois, ye faithfull, for in joy sall we meet whair death may not dissever us.’¹

A BRIEF CATENA FROM THE ELIZABETHAN
DRAMATISTS

Massinger’s play, *The Renegado*

(Act v. Scene 3.)

The Venetian Christian, Vitelli, just before his

¹ Laing’s *Knox*, iii. 215.

execution, baptizes a Moslem lady at Tunis, and then says :—

‘ We part now, blest one,
To meet hereafter in a kingdom where
Hell’s malice shall not reach us.’

Webster’s *Duchess of Malfi*

(Act III. Scène 5.)

The Duchess’s farewell to her steward, Antonio, at the shrine of Loretto :—

‘ In the eternal church, sir, I do hope we shall not part thus.’

Massinger’s *The Virgin Martyr*

(Act II. Scene 1.)

Angelo, the good spirit, serving Dorothea in the guise of a page, tells her :—

‘ My father is in heaven : and, pretty mistress,
If your illustrious hour-glass spend his sand
No worse than yet it does, upon my life,
You and I both shall meet my father there,
And he shall bid you welcome.’

Beaumont and Fletcher's *Bonduca*

(Act v. Scene 5.)

Hengo, the British boy, dying of wounds inflicted by the Romans, cries to his uncle, Caratach, the British commander :

‘ Good noble uncle, weep not.’

Car. Oh, my chicken. My dear boy, what shall I lose ?

Hengo. Why, a child, that must have died however ; had this scaped me, fever or famine—I was born to die, sir.

Car. But thou unblown, my boy ?

Hengo. I go the straighter my journey to the gods. Sure, I shall know you when you come, uncle.

Car. Yes, boy.

Hengo. And I hope we shall enjoy together that great blessedness you told me of.

Car. Most certain, boy. . . . Oh fair flower ; how lovely yet thy ruins show, how sweetly even death embraces thee ! the peace of heaven, the fellowship of all great souls, be with thee.

ONE OF THE PILGRIM FATHERS

The following lines occur in the ‘ Lamentation for the death of that precious and worthy minister of Jesus Christ, Mr. Thomas Hooker, who died July 7, 1647, as the sun was setting. The same

hour of the day died blessed Calvin, that glorious light':—

' Him didst thou serve while life and breath did last,
 With Him now blest, while life and breath is past.
 Sense of our loss would call thee back again.
 But out of love, we bid thee there remain,
 Till we yet left behind our course fulfil,
 To meet thee on the top of Zion's hill ;
 When thou and we shall both rejoice together,
 So fast united as no death shall sever ;
 Both to sing praises to our heavenly King,
 Who hath us saved from death's poisonous sting,
 And will restore our bodies from the grave,
 Which them to dust of death consumed have ;
 Making them shine like brightness of the sun
 With glory, ne'er to end when once begun.
 Let heaven and earth, angels and men Him praise,
 Sounding His glory past all length of days.'

The poem from which these closing lines are taken is included in 'Everyman' edition of *The Chronicles of the Pilgrim Fathers*, to which Mr. John Masefield has written an introduction.

GENERAL LITERATURE

WILLIAM COWPER

From Cowper's letter to Lady Hesketh on the death of his uncle, written June 15, 1788.

' He made impression not soon to be effaced, and

was in figure, in temper, in manner and in numerous other respects such as I shall never behold again. I often think what a joyful interview there has been between him and some of his contemporaries who went before him. The truth of the matter is, my dear, that they are the happy ones, and that we shall never be such ourselves till we have joined the party. Can there be anything so worthy of our warmest wishes as to enter on an eternal, unchangeable state, in blessed fellowship and communion with those whose society we valued most, and for the best reasons, while they continued with us? A few steps more through a vain, foolish world, and this happiness will be yours.'

MAZZINI

The following letter by Mazzini was published for the first time in the *Glasgow Herald* of April 17, 1918. It was addressed to the late Mr. John M'Adam, Glasgow :—

'MY DEAR SIR,—I feel very grateful to you for your having written about your domestic sorrows to me; I take it as the highest proof of friendly feelings, not only of political sympathies. I feel your loss deeply. I have lost one by one, and,

what is worse from afar, all those I love in Italy, a sister excepted ; and I know the deep, irreparable, everlasting grief such losses impart. Family affections, when such do exist, are, I fear, the only constant ones. I have no word of comfort to give you, except the one which your heart has already whispered : Immortality. It is the one which has made me survive those losses and hardened me to my task. Every death of a loved one has been to me a new duty to stand up and not desert the way which made me loved. I believe in Immortality as I believe in Life ; Life cannot die ; it would be God dying. I do believe in conscious Immortality ; without a consciousness of identity it would be a lie ; and the conscience of Humanity does not utter lies. I believe in a progressive life for the individual, as I believe in a progressive life for collective mankind : Life is one, there is only one law for it, under whatever aspects it manifests itself. I believe in the progressive development of our affections, when we live and die in them : they are the best part of our life ; and they are the seed, the initiation of the flower ; the flower unfolds itself elsewhere, just as the flower, born within earth, expands in another element, the air. I believe in

the meeting of those who love ; without that, paired affection, a thing of God, would be nothing but a bitter irony. I believe that meeting to be a reward, the highest perhaps we can have, whilst finite and progressing ; that reward being granted first to constancy in love, secondly as constancy in the task we had in hand at the moment in which the loved one has left us for a while. There is a whole belief and a whole guidance in this ; and I live and walk, sad but composed and firm, as if I was surrounded by the dead I love, and as if any change in me, any withering, barren, egotistical grief, would not only grieve them but prolong the separation. Every death has left her stamp on my soul ; and taken away for ever a smile from my face, because I am a man, whatever I believe in ; and we feel heavily even a temporary separation from those we love ; but it has strengthened me in the fulfilment of what I believe to be my duties and has kept far the cold, dry, atheistical sorrow. Life is nothing but a mission, therefore a sorrow, but not without a consolation ; immortality of love. These feelings are yours, I am sure, therefore I have no other words to utter to you ; and I must limit myself to feel with you till you go, and stretch to you

from here a sympathising, friendly hand ; to you and to Mrs. M'Adam.

‘ About our affairs I shall write to you very soon ; I have written Genoa ; but I do not think we can get much.—Ever yours affectionately,

‘ JOSEPH MAZZINI.’

Oct. 17, 1857.

W. RATHBONE GREG

‘ Millions in all times have walked courageously into the Great Darkness, satisfied that they were going to rejoin the company of those whose places had been long “ left void in their earthly homes,” and, after long yearnings, to satisfy again, “ the mighty hunger of the heart ” in the fulness of eternal joy ;—whatever human affections have been pure, fervent, self-sacrificing, devoted and enduring, look forward to Heaven for their renewal, their resting-place, and their full fruition. If this expectation be delusive, what instinct of the heart can henceforth be trusted ? ’

MAX MÜLLER

Max Müller wrote :—

‘ I know we shall meet again, for God does not

destroy what He has made, nor do souls meet by accident. This life is full of riddles, but divine riddles have a divine answer.'

And again: 'Our broken hearts are the truest earnest of everlasting life.'

'I quite understand,' he said, 'what you mean by the sweetness of grief; it is but another name for that love which lasts for ever.'

W. E. GLADSTONE

'I would from the bottom of my heart,' wrote Mr. Gladstone, 'that whenever the hour of bereavement shall befall you or those whom you love, you and they may enjoy the immeasurable consolation of believing, with all the mind and all the heart, that the beloved one is gone into eternal rest, and that those who remain behind may, through the same mighty deliverer, hope at their appointed time to rejoin him.'

RICHARD BAXTER

'Lord, it belongs not to my care
Whether I die or live;
To love and serve Thee is my share,
And this Thy grace must give.

If life be long, I will be glad,
That I may still obey ;
If short, yet why should I be sad
To soar to endless day ?

Christ leads me through no darker rooms
Than He went through before ;
He that unto God's kingdom comes
Must enter by this door.

Come, Lord, when grace hath made me meet
Thy blessed face to see ;
For, if Thy work on earth be sweet
What will Thy glory be ?

Then shall I end my sad complaints
And weary, sinful days,
And join with the triumphant saints
Who sing Jehovah's praise.

My knowledge of that life is small,
The eye of faith is dim ;
But 'tis enough that Christ knows all
And I shall be with Him.'

A MEETING

' I can recall so well how she would look—
How at the very murmur of her dress
On entering the door, the whole room took
An air of gentleness.

That was so long ago, and yet his eyes
Had always, afterwards, the look that waits
And yearns, and waits again, nor can disguise
Something it contemplates.

May we imagine it ? the sob, the tears,
The long, sweet, shuddering breath ; then, on her
breast,
The great, full, flooding sense of endless years
Of heaven, and her, and rest.'

ANON.

EDWIN MARKHAM

The April Hour

'For over the world a dim hope hovers,
The hope at the heart of all our songs—
That the banded stars are in league with lovers,
And fight against their wrongs.

There are more lives yet, there are more worlds
waiting,

For the way climbs up to the eldest sun,
Where the white ones go to their mystic mating,
And the Holy Will is done.

I will find you there where our low life heightens—
Where the door of the Wonder again unbars,
Where the old love lures and the old fire whitens,
In the stars behind the stars.

Ah, strangely then will the heart be shaken,
For something starry will touch the hour;
And the mystic wind of the worlds will waken,
Stirring the soul's tall flower.

As we go star-stilled in the mystic garden,
All the prose of this life run there to rhyme,
How eagerly will the poor heart pardon
All of these hurts of Time!

For 'twill all come back—the wasted splendour,
The heart's lost youth like a breaking flower,
The dauntless dare, and the wistful, tender
Touch of the April hour.'

DINAH M. CRAIK

All Saints' Day

(At New College Chapel, Oxford)

'I shall find them again, I shall find them again,
Though I cannot tell when or where;
My earthly own, gone to worlds unknown,
But never beyond Thy care.

I shall find them again, I shall find them again,
By the soul that within me dwells,
And leaps unto Thee with rapture free,
As the jubilant anthem swells.

"I heard a voice saying." What it says,
I hear. So perchance do they,
As I stand between my living, I ween,
And my dead, on All Saints' Day.

And I see all clear—new heavens, new earth,
New bodies, redeemed from pain :
New souls—Ah ! not so : with the soul that I know
Let me find, let me find them again !

Let me walk with them under any sky,
Beside any land or sea,
In what shape or make Thou will'st us to take,
If like unto, near to, Thee.

Let me wander wherever Thou bidd'st me go,
Rest, labour, or even remain,
Lulled in long still sleep in the earth or the deep,
If I wake to find them again.

Only at times does the awful mist
Lift off, and we seem to see
For a moment's space the far dwelling-place
Of these, our beloved, and Thee.

Only at times through our soul's shut doors
Come visits divine as brief,
And we cease to grieve, crying, " Lord, I believe ;
Help Thou mine unbelief."

Linger a little, invisible host
Of the sainted dead who stand
Perhaps not far off, though men may scoff—
Touch me with unfelt hand.

But my own, my own, ye are holding me fast,
With the human clasp that I knew ;
Through the chorus clear your voices I hear,
And I am singing with you.

Ah, they melt away and the music dies,
Back comes the world's work—hard, plain ;
Yet God lifted in grace the veil from His face,
And it smiled, "Thou shalt find them again."

JOHN GIBSON LOCKHART

'When youthful faith hath fled,
Of loving take thy leave ;
Be constant to the dead—
The dead cannot deceive.

Sweet modest flowers of spring,
How fleet your balmy day !
And man's brief life can bring
No secondary May :

No earthly burst again
Of gladness out of gloom,
Fond hope and vision vain,
Ungrateful to the tomb.

But 'tis an old belief
That on some solemn shore
Beyond the sphere of grief
Dear friends shall meet once more :

Beyond the sphere of Time
And Sin and Fate's control,
Serene in endless prime
Of body and of soul.

That creed I fain would keep,
That hope I'll not forego—
Eternal be the sleep
Unless to waken so !'

HENRY VAUGHAN

'They are all gone into the world of light !
And I alone sit ling'ring here ;
Their very memory is fair and bright
And my sad thoughts doth clear.

It glows and glitters in my cloudy breast,
Like stars upon some gloomy grove,
Or those faint beams in which this hill is drest
After the sun's remove.

I see them walking in an air of glory
Whose light doth trample on my days :
My days, which are at best but dull and hoary,
Mere glimm'ring and decays.

O holy Hope ! and high Humility,
High as the Heavens above !
These are your walks, and you have show'd them me,
To kindle my cold love.

Dear, beauteous Death ! the jewel of the Just,
Shining nowhere, but in the dark ;
What mysteries do lie beyond thy dust,
Could man outlook that mark !

He that hath found some fledged bird's nest may know,
At first sight, if the bird be flown ;
But what fair well or grove he sings in now,
That is to him unknown.

And yet as Angels in some brighter dreams
Call to the soul, when man doth sleep ;
So some strange thoughts transcend our wonted themes
And into glory peep.

If a star were confined into a tomb,
Her captive flames must needs burn there ;
But when the hand that lock'd her up gives room,
She 'll shine through all the sphere.

O Father of eternal life, and all
Created glories under Thee !
Resume Thy Spirit from the world of thrall
Into true liberty.

Either disperse these mists, which blot and fill
My perspective still as they pass :
Or else remove me hence unto that hill
Where I shall need no glass.'

APPENDIX

THE OLD TESTAMENT

BY PROFESSOR ARTHUR S. PEÁKE, D.D.

THE Hebrews believed in a kind of survival after death. Life in its full sense consisted in the union on this upper earth of the body and soul, the material and relatively immaterial constituents of personality. Death tore these asunder. Yet not completely so. The body is not, apparently, entirely without sensation; the pain of decomposition is felt, or of mutilation after death, the bones retain some of the old vitality and power. The shade has only an attenuated existence, a thin trickle of what was once the full flood of consciousness. Though separated from the body, it feels what the body suffers, since both are parts of the same personality.

Originally it seems to have been thought that the shade dwelt in or near its body which rested in the tomb. It had a certain freedom of movement, and in virtue of its unearthly knowledge could reveal secrets through the necromancer. Very

effective use is made of this as late as Jeremiah, in his wonderful passage describing Rachel at her tomb wailing for the children who have gone into exile. But it is not clear how far one might press this as representing Jeremiah's own view. It is probable that he held the current view of Sheol, and that this passage is to be taken as the poetical use of an older idea.

The conception of Sheol is a development from the grave. Here the shades of all men are gathered together. There is no distinction of the good and evil. Earlier conditions are to some extent reproduced, kings sit on thrones, the shade appears in the garb worn at death, or bearing the wounds inflicted upon him. But the old social tyrannies have ceased; the slave is free from his master. It is a life of untroubled peace, of intolerable tedium, pale, negative, colourless, but also free almost entirely from the pain and anxiety of life.

There is reunion in Sheol. After death a man is gathered to his kinsfolk. To return to the warm upper life of earth is impossible. Job again and again contemplates it as a possibility, but always sets the thought of it aside, as something out of the question. But at death there is reunion with

those who have gone before. David cannot bring back the dearly-loved child ; but he comforts himself with the thought ' I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.' The old life in families, clans, tribes, nations is reproduced in Sheol. But this is contingent on burial in the family grave, to which the greatest importance was attached. If a man is buried elsewhere, or is not buried at all, he goes down, according to the usual view, to Sheol, but separation from the family grave precludes reunion with the family. Thus in Isaiah xiv., the king of Babylon, because he is not joined with his fathers in burial, descends, it is true, to Sheol, and creates a sensation by his arrival ; but he is doomed to lie on the soil of the under-world, a soil infested with worms, in Sheol's furthest recesses, instead of sitting on a throne.

The outlook for the future was gloomy at the best. Cut off from the rich and varied interests of the upper-world, with all its substantial satisfactions, banished for ever from the only sphere in which communion with God was possible, the shade dragged out its weary, monotonous, interminable existence, in dreariness and apathy. But if it had no vivid joys, it was free from anything but the

dullest pains ; and it had such consolation as could be given by the reunion with the family and the kin, which was secured by reunion of their bodies in the family grave.

From this hopeless outlook religion moved in the later pre-Christian centuries in two directions. The thought which Job again and again contemplated with longing, but always to set it firmly aside in the end, became a hope and then a belief. This was, that soul and body might return from Sheol and the grave, be reunited, and resume their old life on earth. This was the hope of a resurrection, first limited to righteous Israelites, especially martyrs, then extended as a penalty to some of the wicked, especially apostates. The other line of advance had its root in religious experience. The communion which the saint enjoyed with God was so deep, so intimate, so precious, that it rose triumphant over death. Death could not dissolve a fellowship so close and so perfect. Hence grew the belief in the immortality of the soul, the blessed continuance of life after death in communion with God.

THE CLASSICAL WORLD

BY T. E. PAGE, D.C.L.

DEAR SIR ROBERTSON NICOLL,—The classical world had such hazy conceptions of a future life that, as far as I know, the more specialised idea of reunion hardly emerges at all.

To Homer the dead are ‘ feeble folk ’ (*νεκύων ἀμένηνα κάρηνα*) who need to ‘ drink blood ’ before they can feel lively enough to talk, and I have looked through the ‘ Sepulchral Epigrams ’ in the Greek Anthology without finding one, even among the less artificial and more homely, which suggests the idea of reunion. Of course for poetical purposes the dead are often represented as awaiting their kin, and when a warrior slays another he may bid him scornfully take some message to his dead sire or the like, and in Soph. *Antigone*, Antigone who is to die because she insisted on burying her dead brother, as she is led away apostrophises the tomb, saying (l. 897) :—

ἐλθοῦσα μέντοι κάρτ' ἐν ἐλπίσιν τρέφω
φίλη μὲν ἥξειν πατρί, προσφιλῆς δὲ σοί,
μήτερ, φίλη δὲ σοί, κασίγνητον κάρα.

She has good hopes that she 'will come dear' to her kinsfolk, and, though this is not very definite, at any rate she is willing to die (and does die) rather than offend or injure her brother's ghost.

In Plato's *Phaedo*, where you might expect to find something on the subject, the 'great hope' spoken of is only that the soul, now wholly freed from the body, shall find that of which it was enamoured in life, to wit 'wisdom,' and dwell 'with the gods,' or possibly in the company of others who 'have truly studied philosophy,' though he does refer (*Phaedo*, 68A) to the fact that 'many on the death of wives and sons, etc., voluntarily willed to pass into Hades, being led by the hope that there they will see and dwell with those they longed for.'

In the *Apology* Socrates says that in Hades he will find 'just judges,' such as Minos and Rhadamanthus, and such 'heroes' (ἡμίθεοι) as 'showed themselves just,' and suggests how delightful it will be to meet with 'Orpheus and Musaeus and Hesiod and Homer.' But nowhere does he suggest to his wife or sons, or even to his disciples, that they may meet again, and generally where any meeting after death is referred to, it is a meeting with men of note and eminence. And this holds in the few

passages in Latin writers where the subject is discussed.

In the *De Senectute*, xxii. 79, 80, Cicero speaks of the 'glorious day' when, leaving the rabble and riff-raff of Rome, he shall join the *divinum animorum concilium coetumque*, and meet with the Scipios and great men of Rome; but I doubt whether this is more than a rhetorical suggestion that he claims to be one of them (cf. the story of Beaconsfield and the House of Lords); and in the letter (*Ad. Fam.*, bk. iv.) which S. Sulpicius addressed to him on the death of his daughter Tullia, there is not a hint of any reunion.

In Seneca too, who is endlessly talking of life and death, even in the long *Consolatio ad Marciam*, after masses of the usual Stoic commonplaces, I find only this (c. xxv. Lodge's translation):—

'He hath been carried to far higher places, where he converseth with the happier soules, and hath been entertained by that holy company of Scipioses, Catoes, and others. . . . There, Martia, thy father, embraceth his nephew (although that there all be parents), joyful to see him enlightened with a great brightnesse, and teacheth him the courses of the neighbouring starres, etc., etc.'

And this seems to me purely a bit of rhetoric.

Even Virgil, in the Sixth *Æneid*, seems rather to use the under-world as a convenient *mise-en-scène* (cf. the use made of Sheol by Isaiah to bring out his scorn for the king of Babylon) than from any real belief, and the picture of Dido fleeing from Æneas into a grove :—

*Conjux ubi pristinus illi
respondet curis aequatque Sychaeus amorem,*

is rather a piece of artistry than anything else.

Generally speaking, I think this fragment from a comic poet illustrates the feeling of antiquity on the matter :—

εἰ ταῖς ἀληθείαισιν οἱ τεθνηκότες
αἰσθησιν εἶχον, ἄνδρες ὡς φασὶν τινες,
ἀπηγξάμην ἂν ὥστ' ἰδεῖν Ἑυριπίδην.

‘If in truth the dead had perception, as some say, I would have hung myself so that I might see Euripides.’

Yours very sincerely,

T. E. PAGE.

THE CHURCH OF ROME

BY THE REV. CANON WILLIAM BARRY, D.D.

DEAR SIR WILLIAM NICOLL,—Your question illustrates a certain deep difference between the English way, as I will call it, and the Catholic, of being concerned about the life to come. Let me put my meaning sharply.

The Sadducees asked mockingly, ‘ In the Resurrection whose wife shall she be ? ’ Our Lord replied, ‘ Ye do err . . . for in the Resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the Angels of God in Heaven.’

These words end once for all the tribal idea, that of the family or the clan, projected into the eternal order. It cannot be descried *sub specie æternitatis*. Man’s relation to God his Maker and Redeemer is of the alone to the Alone. Nations die, and do not rise again. The family is a thing of flesh and blood, bounded in time, and not implying consanguinity of the spirit. Hence Christ summons His followers to leave their kindred in

language most emphatic and peremptory, 'Unless a man renounce . . . he cannot be my disciple.'

The City of God is not a City of the Tribes, but the City of Friends. It looks for citizens 'without father, without mother,' born of the Spirit. 'One is your Father, in Heaven.'

Thus the Catholic Church holds, and on such a belief she has ever acted. Her doctrine touching Eternity runs, 'Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord.' She calls them Saints in Heaven, the Holy Souls in Purgatory. They are sure of God's sight, the Beatific Vision; they shall know even as they are known. The Communion of Saints is begun *here*, made perfect *there*. We invoke the Saints; we pray for the Holy Souls.

To ask then, 'Shall we be reunited in Eternity?' is all one with asking, 'Shall we be saved or lost?'

But such a supernatural view seems hard to Englishmen, who by temperament are in no small measure Sadducee, while, if believing, they still carry their family arrangements into a world which transcends all the lines and qualities of mere human nature. Sermons in English pulpits at funeral services almost always dwell on 'reunion'; 'we shall meet again'; so do hymns like, 'O that

will be joyful, when we meet to part no more,' and the S. Army chant, ' Shall we gather by the river ? ' Not such is the tone of the Catholic Requiem. In the Mass we do indeed recite St. Paul, 1 Thess. iv. 18, but the comfort held out is ' to be for ever with the Lord.'

As our theologians handle the matter, it resolves itself into questions concerning angelic knowledge, the privileges and powers of the soul which being admitted to Purgatory or to Heaven has come to a higher stage of supernatural existence. These problems are treated in the *Summa* of St. Thomas Aquinas. It is generally held that the Saints enjoying the Beatific Vision see human events and persons in that light ; and of course they know one another. On the knowledge possessed by the Holy Souls which are undergoing purification there is no general doctrine. The Church has never defined these points. (You might glance at 'The Dream of Gerontius.')

Pope Leo XIII. condemned certain ' propositions ' of Antonio Rosmini, 38, 39, 40, which seemed to limit the Beatific Vision of the Saints to what they could know of God through His created effects (*opera ad extra*) or in His creatures. The Church

teaches that they know God Himself directly, by intuition, and all else in the 'light of glory,' thus given them. They need no creature to be perfectly happy ; but they know their companions in bliss.

Ever yours sincerely,

WILLIAM BARRY.

THE MYSTICS

BY ARTHUR EDWARD WAITE

MY DEAR SIR WILLIAM,—You have set me the hardest thing which has come my way recently. There is so little in the mystics on Reunion in Eternity, that I was prompted to answer your question by denying that there was anything at all; but I felt that I must look about me, and hence the chief reason of my long delay in writing. I have been searching this evening in the old quarto containing the Surius translation of Ruysbroeck into Latin. Ruysbroeck says that the saints and all believers are one in Christ Jesus and are members one of another. This is in *De Fide et Judicio Tractatulus*; but it does not help you. He says also that we shall see with our intellectual eyes the glory in common of God, of angels and of saints. This is in *De Septem Amoris Gradibus Libellus*; but again it is not much to your purpose. However, in *De Vera Contemplatione Opus*, cap. 26, he says that by the elevation of our whole being,

all our forces and all our faculties, in love to God we reach into the unity-state of all loving spirits in the source of Divine Grace. God dwells in that unity and dispenses to each loving spirit according to the dignity of each. It must be said that Ruysbroeck is speaking of a state which can be attained here and now, but it is obviously a foretaste of the bliss in union hereafter. There is also the Hermit of Hampole, our well-beloved Richard Rolle, who has one sentence, and it is pregnant. Speaking of love in its unitive and transforming strength, he says that it makes lovers one in deed and will, adding this, as by a sudden inspiration: 'And Christ and every holy soul it makes one.'

I have gone through other records, as, for example, the *Directorium Mysticum* of Antonio a Spiritu Sancto, which quotes many authorities on all departments of the mystical experience, but I have found nothing.

You must not be surprised at the silence of the mystics: they were concerned only with the union of the soul and God, and one of the limitations in their quest was that they tended to regard the love of creatures as a hindrance, except in so far as it belonged to the detached counsels of charity.

If it be worth while to offer you as a mystic my own view on the subject, I would put it roughly, but perhaps clearly, in the following way.

What is Divine Union ? It is realisation in God. What is that which realises ? It is our own self. What is the first consequence of attaining the state of union ? A change in the centre of our being, for the self is in God, and henceforth and for ever is no longer in its own centre. What is the next consequence ? The attainment of all in God that belongs to Him. What does this signify ? It signifies, among other things, the communion of saints in the eternal. The doctrine is : They in Him and He in us. This is the Reunion in Eternity, in the state of redemption, with those whom we have loved on earth. But what of those who, according to our limited human discernment, are not in this state ? I know only that we have the promise of that time—which indeed is outside all time—when God shall be all in all. That is when Christ gives up the Kingdom to the Father.

Excellent friend, it is very beautiful in our all-imperfect following of the mystic path to know that we are not striving alone to go up into the Sanctuary of the Union ; that we are one and

another in a great procession, 'of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues,' of to-day and of the immemorial past and of the ages to follow ; and that when in the day of attainment we are drawn within the veil of that sanctuary there is no such thing as being alone in God. It is the Catholic state of reunion. I have said somewhere else : It is certain that human love finds its fruition in Him, so only that it is pure and holy and real.

Yours ever,

A. E. WAITE.

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